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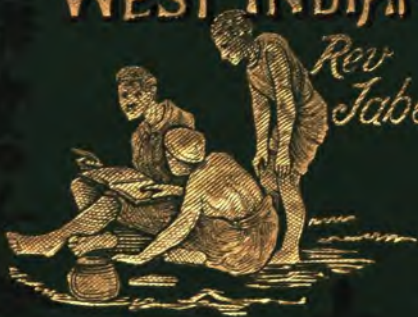
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IN THE
TROPICS
or
Scenes and Incidents
of
WEST INDIAN LIFE

Rev
Jabez Mearns





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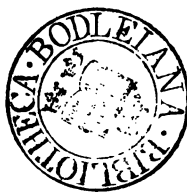


IN THE TROPICS;
OR,
*SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF
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IN THE TROPICS;
OR,
SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF WEST
INDIAN LIFE.

BY
REV. JABEZ MARRAT.



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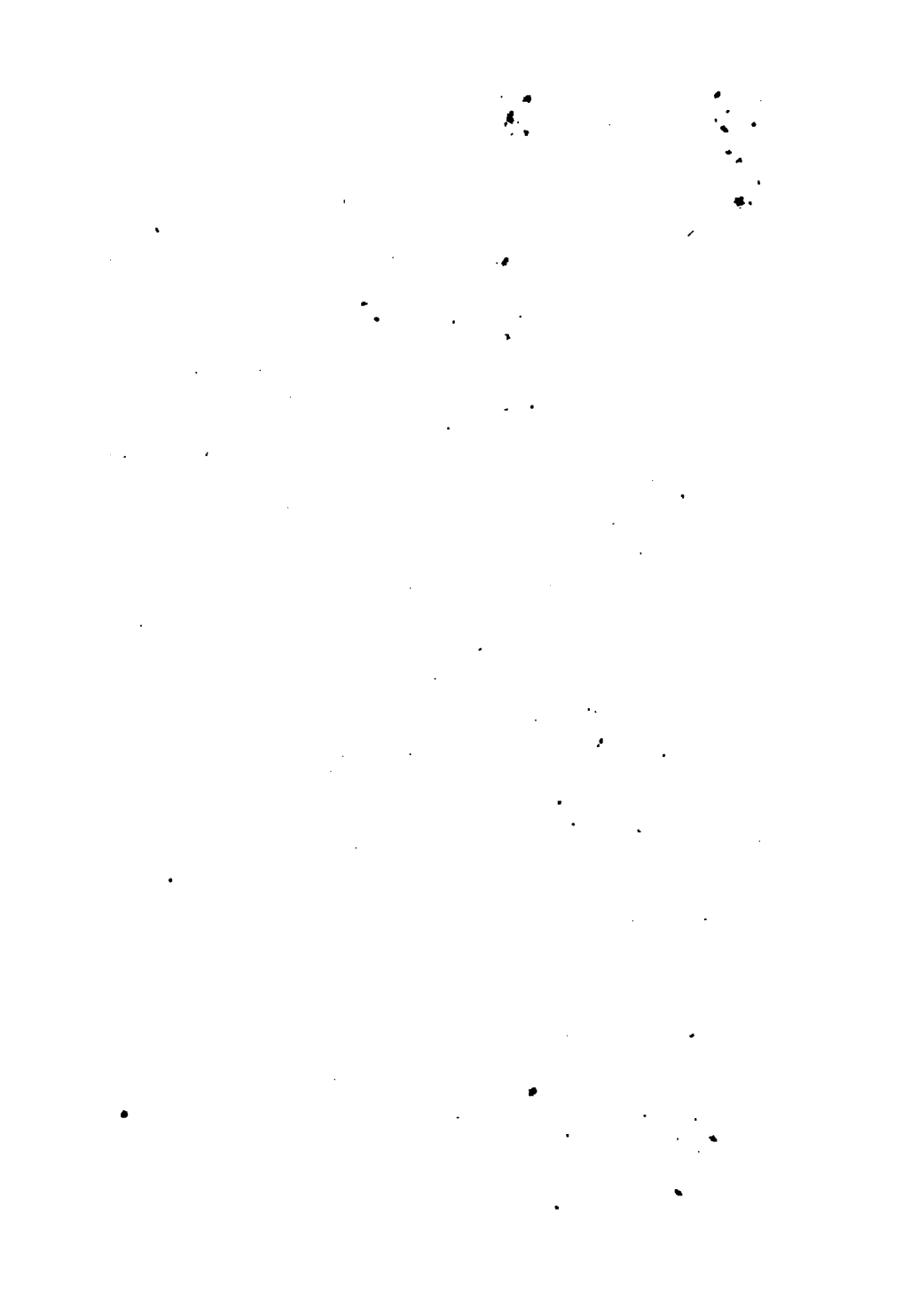
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To illustrate "In the Tropics" by the Rev. Jabez Marrat.

A T L A N T I C
O C E A N

ST INDIA IS^{DS}

CHAPTER I.

The Caribbean Islands.



THE record of a voyage in the Caribbean Sea is one of the most delightful that the book of memory can contain. The calm blue of the waters is gently ruffled by the trade winds ; the ship's bows are garlanded with rainbows woven

of spray and sunshine ; there is a track of white foam in its wake ; while flying fishes like silvery arrows dart to and fro. Night as well as day has charms for the tropical voyager. There will often not be a speck of cloud on all the firmament, and

the planets and constellations appear larger and brighter than in this more northern clime. Many of the stars are new to European eyes, and the Southern Cross brings to mind the old Spanish cry, "Midnight is past, the Cross begins to bend." Even the waters are luminous with phosphoric light, and streaks of fire on the sea mimic the nebulae of the heavens. But there are other pleasures than those afforded by sea, and sky, and balmy air. No sooner is one lovely island left behind than another is descried. First there is a shadowy, cloud-like appearance above the horizon ; then a faint glimmer of delicate green ; then the distinct outline of the hills, the variegated hues of the foliage, and a fragrance suggesting "Sabeian odours from the spicy shore of Araby the blest." Along the coast there is a noble panorama of sloping or precipitous hills, broken into ravines, or opening into valleys, which—with their careful cultivation set against a background of bamboos, ferns, long grass, or dense dark forest—have an aspect so peaceful and inviting that the European feels that he would gladly land and live there, without one regretful sigh for the excitement and stir of busier scenes. The charms of the land are enhanced by the thought that winter never breaks in upon their beauty. No snowdrift ever chokes up those wild romantic passes from the beach to the table-land.

No hoar frost whitens the leaves of those mango and lime trees, no ice glistens in the bed of those sparkling rivers. The only change in the weather is from dry to wet, from wet to dry. Summer reigns in glory and luxuriance from the beginning to the end of the year. With the exception of a flush of green when rain comes after a long drought, the general features of a West Indian landscape are always the same. Perhaps by careful observation a man might compile a floral almanac, but to the cursory glance there is little in branch or bud to distinguish one month from another. In this country we know April by its crown of violets; June by its honeysuckles; August by its ripened wheat-ears; October by the falling leaves of the orchard and the wood. But in the tropics an allegorical procession of the months, such as is depicted in the *Faery Queene*, would overtask a genius even equal to that of Spenser, for the months there are as a band of sisters alike in face and garb. At Christmas the earth is as gay and the sun as bright as in the middle of the year; and when in England the family seeks the comfort of the blazing fire, in the West Indies windows are thrown open for the sake of the cooling breeze, and black men without shoes complain that the ground burns their feet. Nor is the equal measurement of day and night less striking. With the

variation of a few minutes, the sun always rises and sets at the same hours. There is, however, not much disadvantage in this. If it is never light at nine o'clock at night, it is never dark at four o'clock in the afternoon. If the morning never comes extremely early, it never comes extremely late. There is scarcely any twilight, morning or evening. Sunrise seen from the ship's deck is a magnificent sight. The sun comes like a conqueror in golden armour, through an arch of fire; and wave and sky are lighted by a sudden glory. The day departs abruptly as it comes. While the eye is yet entranced by the calm splendour of sunset—the land and water gorgeous as if strewn with the plumage of tropic birds—darkness veils the scene, and the gloom is deep as at midnight.

The productions of the soil are altogether different from what we are accustomed to in England. It would be vain to look for fields of wheat, or barley, or oats. But the vegetation of other kinds is wonderfully exuberant. In illustration of this it may be mentioned that posts put into the ground while full of sap, have been known to send out a flourishing crown of twigs and branches. The bamboo is a conspicuous feature in West Indian scenery, and has a pleasing effect when seen high up on the ridges of the hills, or bending so as to form a long succes-

sion of arches over the bright cool rivers. It is a gigantic grass, having a hollow stem three or four inches in diameter, and fifteen or twenty feet in length. There is in it such vigour of life that a slip thrown carelessly on the ground will take root, and stalk after stalk will appear, until there is a cluster several yards in circumference. But there is another grass, which, though not quite so graceful as the bamboo, is of much greater service to man. This is the sugar-cane, the staple product of the West Indian Colonies. It grows to a height varying from eight to sixteen feet ; it has a knotted stem, a few long flag-like leaves, and when its growth is matured bears a large plummy flower. Every part of this plant is useful for some purpose: the leaves for feeding cattle, the flower makes not uncomfortable beds and pillows, the stem yields the saccharine juice, and when dried supplies fuel for the boiling-house. When the cane is ripe, it is cut, tied up in bundles, and carried in carts, or on the backs of mules, and in some places slid down a rope from the top of a precipice to the sugar mill. Some mills are worked by steam, some by wind, some by water, and some by oxen. The cane is crushed between perpendicular rollers, and the juice is run in troughs to the boiling-house, and after being boiled to a proper consistency, and undergoing other neces-

sary processes is shovelled into hogsheads and shipped for Europe. But in addition to the sugar-cane there are many other productions, such as Indian corn, arrowroot, ginger, cinnamon, the nutmeg, the coffee berry, the yam, the banana, and the plantain. The two latter are similar in appearance, growing to a height of about twelve feet, and having immense drooping leaves, under which the finger-shaped fruit hangs in a heavy cluster. The plantain is the principal diet of the common people, and is moderately good either baked or boiled. But though the black man eats it from year to year, and cares for little else, it has not the qualities that content the European. This is shown by an amusing anecdote. A young Englishman named Rudder was employed as an overseer on a sugar estate. His master was somewhat niggardly, and wished to get all the work out of him that he could, without being put to much cost for his food. It is said that men are "cradled into poetry by wrong," and this young man sought relief for his indignation in verse. On the door of the sugar mill he wrote in chalk :—

" Hard plantains and fish,
Is poor Rudder's dish."

His master, seeing this inscription and rightly judging that he was not satisfied with his fare, changed the salt fish for salt beef, but still gave out the

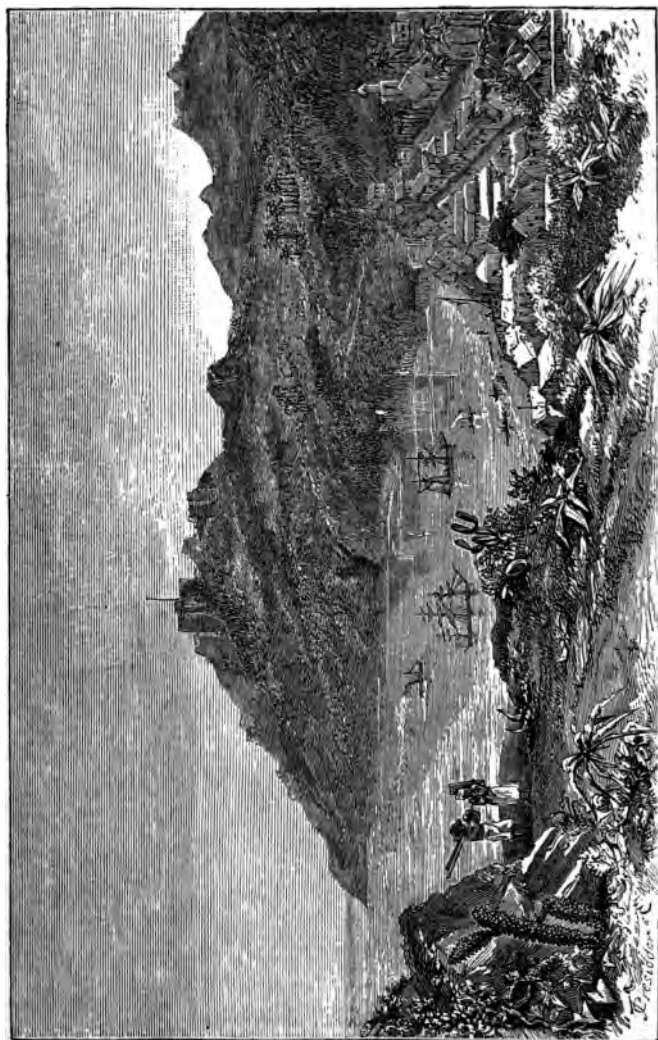
usual accompaniment of plantains. Then the inscription was effaced, but the blank was filled up with a new one :—

“ For a little relief,
Hard plantains and beef.”

The cocoa-nut tree is common in the West Indies. There is scarcely a beach which is not picturesque with its long, slender stem, and canopy of foliage. Some trees shrink from the sea air, but this is unaffected by it ; excepting that the stem is bent like a bow where it is exposed to the constant pressure of the trade winds. It differs in this respect from the tropical palm, which, whether on the rock overhanging the bay, or on the spur of an inland mountain, is always erect as an obelisk of granite. The cocoa-nut tree is often in groves, which form beautiful arcades through which it is pleasant to pass when the tide is murmuring on the sands, and the leaves gently swayed by the breeze show glimpses of blue sky above, and give play of shifting lights and shadows to the ground. The nut, with its brown husk and hard shell, is too well known to need description, but it may be mentioned that while its husk is yet green and its shell soft it contains a quantity of sweet cool water very refreshing to those who have been walking or riding in the heat of the sun. The greater part of the nuts, when fully

ripened, are exported ; but from some of them oil is extracted for chapel lamps and other purposes. The stem is a coarse fibre which never consolidates into wood, but it is sometimes used for posts in enclosures and inferior buildings.

A stranger approaching the islands on a calm day, and looking on their luminous shores, their embowered dwellings, their tranquil vales, and grand peaks, would be ready to imagine that he was about to realise all the enchantment of the Hesperian gardens, or the Arcadian dells. But there is no unbroken quietude for man on earth ; and life, even in those delightful scenes, is at times disturbed and endangered by natural convulsions. St. Vincent's—described by Carlyle as “a place of rugged chasms, precipitous gnarled heights, and the most fruitful hollows ; shaggy everywhere with luxuriant vegetation ; set under magnificent skies, in the mirror of the summer seas”—has more than once been desolated by eruptions of its gigantic Souffriere. The other islands, though untroubled by volcanic flame and lava, have their visitations of earthquake and hurricane. There are many shocks of earthquake, which though alarming are not destructive. There is a loud noise like thunder rolling underground, rapid oscillations of the earth cause the houses to tremble from foundation to roof, chairs and tables dance in unison with the



KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT'S.

movement, pictures flap against the walls, crockery is cracked or broken, and people hasten into the street or the garden, not knowing but that in another moment their dwelling may be dashed into a heap of ruin. But there are times when the shock is violent and disastrous. The ground heaves and swells, and cracks into yawning crevices, rocks are split and shattered, the beds of rivers are laid bare, the sea is agitated from beneath, towns and villages are nearly, if not altogether destroyed, and men, women, and children go down into gulfs that suddenly close over them, or are killed by the falling stones or timbers. The hurricane is as ruinous in its effects as the earthquake. The tempest rages with such fury that trees are uprooted, buildings thrown down, and ships lifted high on the beach. So vivid and incessant is the lightning that the whole heavens seem in conflagration; appalling thunders mingle their stormy music with the roar of the waves, the shriek of the winds, and the frantic cries of those who are in expectation of almost immediate death. The roof of a house may be torn away, and its doors and windows be driven in, yet there is little hope of safety in flight, for there is danger of being blown over a precipice, or struck by boards and shingles, which are drifted to and fro as if they were light as threads of gossamer. When the

storm has ceased the sky again bends in lovely blue over land and water, and the sun shines out as resplendently as before ; but the island from end to end is one scene of desolation. Hundreds of families are houseless, and their distress is embittered by bereavement, for some have to lament parents, and others children, crushed beneath masses of fallen masonry or wood-work. Homes that a few hours before were beautiful with projecting verandah and shading foliage are laid low. Cane-fields and provision grounds are as thoroughly devastated as if a troop of wild elephants had rushed over them ; roads are barricaded by trees that have been hurled from the woods on the hill-side ; and at every few steps on the beach there is a fragment of wreck, or the dead body of a seaman. Happy are those who, when the islands are reeling with earthquake, or when the elements are fiercely commingling in the hurricane, can hide themselves in the secret place of the Divine tabernacle, and reply to the noise and the havoc, in the confident note struck in old time by the musicians of Jerusalem : " God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; *though* the waters thereof roar and be troubled, *though* the mountains shake

with the swelling thereof." But life in the West Indies, and especially the life of the European, is endangered by disease as well as by natural convulsion. In some quiet nook, enclosed by cactus, and shadowed by the tamarind and the tree-jasmine, we see a line of graves, and we ascertain that they are the graves of white men who have died of fever. Many a stalwart son of Britain has been stricken down in that golden clime. The sailor, the soldier, the planter, the merchant, the Government official, the missionary, may often be found resting side by side. Some of them when they left their friends in England or Scotland promised soon to be back. They wrote, and their letters were joyful and hopeful; they might have been dated from Paradise, the lines were in such a glow with the enchantments of vale and mountain, unclouded heaven and sapphire sea. But by the next mail there was a letter in a strange handwriting, giving tidings of their death and burial. How soon that terrible fever brings down the pride and glory of man to the dust! It usually begins with lassitude and aching in the limbs; then there is head-ache, with pain in the back or the side; then severer pain, pain that makes the nerves feel as if on fire; agony rushes into delirium; there are wild imaginings or incoherent words, or perhaps the patient, as if in a quiet dream, talks of the

scenes and the friends at home ; black vomit comes on, life is rapidly breathed away, and all is over. The fever, if it cannot be checked, so speedily ends in death, and the heat of the climate renders interment necessary so soon after death, that a gentleman having heard that his son was sick in a distant part of the island, started at once to see him, but found when he got to the house that he was not only dead but also buried.

Numbers of Wesleyan ministers have died in different parts of the West Indies ; some in the course of natural decay, after many years of persevering toil for Christ, but many more in the opening promise of a noble and beneficent manhood. Lips that were just beginning to speak to the people in words of power and beauty have been silenced, and hearts dilating over early triumphs in the Name of Immanuel have ceased to beat. The faithful members of the Mission churches have wept because of the swift departure of those whom they loved as their best friends, and honoured as the servants of the Lord ; and there has been sorrow in English homes—in dwellings in the city, in farm-houses and cottages—from the endearments of which those young men set out on their errand of love. But they could not have died in a worthier service ; their memory is affectionately cherished in Caribbean towns and ham-

lets ; the effect of their labour is seen in the transformed lives of men and women who represent "God's image in ebony," and those who have succeeded them cannot pass their graves without resolving to be like them in whole-hearted devotion to the Master. "Nor could they wish couch more magnificent." The azure skies are as a vaulted glory above them ; the mountains, on which the woods hang like a pall, enriched with gorgeous diapering, stand as the guardians of their peaceful slumber ; tropic flowers make radiant light on their sepulchres, and the sea with deep and solemn tone sings their requiem. It is, however, far more consoling for those who mourn their death to know that their souls dwell in Sabbatic joy before the throne of God, and that from those distant burial-grounds their bodies will rise with as much majesty and splendour at the last day as if they had been laid in graves dug beneath a canopy of English oaks.

CHAPTER II.

Antigua. Barbadoes. and Tobago.



ANTIGUA was discovered by Columbus on his second voyage, and the name it bears was given by him in honour of a Spanish church, known as Santa Maria de la Antigua. Though presenting some bold cliffs to the sea,

and having some picturesque slopes and valleys, it is not so beautiful and romantic as many of the other islands. But even if level as a marsh, and bare of verdure as the crater of a volcano, it would have a charm for Methodist eyes, for

it was the scene of Dr. Coke's first labours in the West Indies. What were the providential circumstances which opened to him a great and effectual door in that part of the world? We go back to the year 1784 and enter a plainly furnished study in the City-road, London. We see at once that its occupant is a man of order, for the books on the shelves are all so arranged that he could lay his hand on the one he wanted in the dark; and there is no litter of papers, but every letter and document is so placed as to be accessible in a moment. There are two men in that study. One is aged, yet his eye retains the fire of youth, his brow shows power of calm and masterly thought, and benevolence lights up all his features. He is such a man that his lesser gifts and attainments would be a fame for other men. But in addition to his genius as a poet, his depth in philosophy, his range of scholarship, his searching wit, yet rare temper as a controversialist, he has achieved yet higher greatness as a preacher consummate in transparency and directness, an evangelist claiming the world as his parish, an ecclesiastical ruler having influence beyond that of archbishops. The man with that versatile intellect, and large heart, and vast activity, can be no other than John Wesley. The other individual seated in that study is in the prime of life, with cheek as ruddy and

hair as black as when in boyhood he sported along the streets of Brecon. He looks with love and admiration on his venerable associate, whom he has served as a son in the Gospel. His name is Thomas Coke. There is a work to do in America. The United States have just won their independence, and it is necessary to put the Methodist Societies there on a new basis. Mr. Wesley has called Dr. Coke into his study to converse with him on the new arrangements and to commit them to his hands.

At the latter end of the year Dr. Coke set out for America, and not only did what Mr. Wesley enjoined upon him, but, prompted by kindly feeling and Christian principle, lifted up his voice against slavery. This gave great offence to those who, though proud of their own freedom, wished to keep the sons of Africa in bondage. In one town there was a riot, and a lady, with unladylike spirit, went among the rioters, offering them a reward of fifty pounds if they would give the little Doctor a hundred lashes. After being some time in America, Dr. Coke returned to England and resumed his evangelistic labours, going from county to county with the word of life, and adding the Channel Islands to the sphere of his benevolent operations. But America again required his services, and he embarked for Nova Scotia, with three preachers, who had been appointed to act as mis-

sionaries to the British settlers in that province. The voyage was a trying one, sails were torn away, the water rose ominously in the hold, and at one time the ship was on her beam ends. But Dr Coke did not allow the dangers and discomforts to interfere with his studies. He was busy with his pen, or he renewed his intimacy with Virgil or read his favourite Spenser until the rude timbers of the dim cabin seemed hung with the gorgeous shields of faithful knights, and radiant with the lovely faces of embodied virtues; or with his Greek Testament in his hand, became oblivious of the dash of the waves and the creaking of the pumps as the words of Jesus poured their music into his soul, and Apostles speeding through the world with tidings of salvation swept before his mental vision. The captain, who violently assailed Dr. Coke as being, with his companions, the cause of the tempest, found it impossible to get to Nova Scotia, and struck out for the West Indies. Then all was changed, and the worn and wearied voyagers had blue sky above them and placid waters and groups of leafy islands before them. As Dr. Etheredge has said, "The clouds broke away in dissolving forms of beauty; a splendid tropic bird floated in the air before the ship, as if to welcome them to its own region; and the shattered bark, on the gentle ripples of the Caribbean Sea, reached a grateful

though unexpected haven in Antigua on the Feast of the Nativity—a day of good omen to those islands of the West ; for to their sable myriads fast bound it brought the messengers of their redemption for time and eternity.” Dr. Coke landed on Christmas Day, and, going up the street of St. John’s, saw a white man accompanied by a number of negroes. The white man was John Baxter, who had been a Local Preacher in England, but did not forget his vocation in Antigua. When he arrived there he found that Methodism had been introduced by the Hon. Mr. Gilbert, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, who, on a visit to England, had been converted under a sermon by Mr. Wesley. After his death two black women had endeavoured to keep the little Society together. John Baxter, true to his Methodist instincts, attached himself to what was to him not less the cause of God because it was poor and feeble and represented by black faces. The Society flourished under his care. Fifteen hundred members were in church fellowship, and a rude chapel had been built for their accommodation. Baxter was on his way to preach to the people when he was met by Dr. Coke and the three missionaries who had been destined for Nova Scotia. Baxter did not need the sermon he had prepared for that morning’s service ; for, with a glad and thankful heart, he gave up

the pulpit to Dr. Coke, who preached on the prophetic words which he could not but think were being fulfilled before his eyes, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God." We should like to have been at that service, to have heard the untutored yet impassioned music of the Christmas hymn, and the ringing chorus of "Amens" at the close of the prayer; to have witnessed the enthusiasm of the preacher, who, though little of stature, had soul enough to animate a giant; and to have seen John Baxter in his happy excitement, and the hundreds of dark faces beaming with broad light, and wet with joyful tears. Dr. Coke was not content with what he saw in Antigua, but went from island to island, gathering congregations, forming Societies, and organising the Mission which has proved one of the signal glories of the Methodist Church.

Columbus and Coke! These names indicate widely different lines of action, but they are both inseparably connected with West Indian history, and the latter is not below the former in true renown. Columbus is honoured as the discoverer of the West Indies; Coke is honoured as their evangelist. The ship in which Columbus sailed in his daring way to sunsets further and yet further West will be spoken of to the end of time; the ship from which Coke first beheld the splendours of the Caribbean Archipelago is not less worthy

of being famed in song and story. Columbus won for his coat of arms the proud imagery of that new world which by his genius and enterprise he had given to Spain : Coke ensured the love of thousands of slaves, and cheered their downcast souls by telling them of a world where, no longer troubled by the bond-master, they would walk with Christ in white. Columbus returned to Spain and told his countrymen how he had seen the Southern Cross augustly beaming above the lands of the golden zone ; Coke returned to England and told his countrymen how he had seen the hut of many a negro illumined by the transfiguring light radiated from the Cross of Christ. Widely different were the effects following the appearance of the two men ; one being unintentionally the herald of woe and extermination to the aborigines, the other sent by Providence as the herald of light and salvation to men and women torn from their African homes to minister to the greed of Europeans.

“ The footfall of the ocean-lord, whose birth
Is brightest of the lines in Genoa's fame,
Sounded the death-doom of the Carib tribes ;
For in his track unpyting Spaniards rushed,
Staining the green fringe of the rills with blood
Of those poor savages, even dragging them
With blood-hounds from the secrecy of woods,
Where they sought refuge from the white man's face.
But he whose star first dawned in Brecon's street,
Was harbinger of life and jubilee

To those of Afric's children doomed to toil
In the ravines and valleys of the isles,
Set on the Western deep, like jars of flowers
On pavements glistening for the feet of kings."

Columbus, when he steered into the calm of those azure seas and saw the gorgeous landscapes slanting upward from the foam of their breakers, was elated by the thought of new honours for the banner of Spain, and wider fields of triumph for the Papal Church ; but if from the deck of his ship he could have looked into the future years, what amazement would have filled his soul ! He would have seen Spain bereft of her West Indian Colonies, with the exception of Cuba, and the flag of England floating over the greater number of them ; he would have seen Dr. Coke driven by the tempest to Antigua, and hastening thence to other islands with tidings of life and liberty for the enslaved negroes ; he would have seen others following in the steps of Dr. Coke, and though assailed by persecution still keeping to their holy task. And if he could have looked onward to the present day, he would have seen Methodist chapels and school-houses on the hills and in the valleys, and tens of thousands of enfranchised negroes walking in the light of the Lord, and tens of thousands of negro children receiving instruction from the lips of Christian teachers.

Who could see the rocks, the beach, the surf of

Antigua without being reminded of the wreck of the *Maria* mail-boat, when five missionaries, two wives, and four children of missionaries, and the servants and crew were lost? One only of the company, Mrs. Jones, was spared to tell the dreadful tale of suffering and death. The District Meeting had been held in St. Christopher's, and the missionaries with their families embarked for Antigua. They reached Montserrat, and were compelled to put in there by the violence of the weather. Wishing to get to their work as speedily as possible, they left their own vessel and went on board the *Maria*. The morning after they left Montserrat the sea was rough, but about four o'clock they sighted Antigua and hoped soon to be on the land. The children who were awake sang a hymn, and one bright little fellow related the story of Jonah and other Biblical narratives. Though the vessel pitched and rolled in a manner to excite alarm, the Mission party had a tranquil confidence in God, and Mrs. Jones, whose mind from the first had been agitated by a presentiment of disaster, found comfort in the words :—

“ When passing through the watery deep,
I ask in faith His promised aid,
The waves an awful distance keep,
And shrink from my devoted head :
Fearless their violence I dare ;
They cannot harm, for God is there ! ”

Suddenly there was consternation on deck and in the cabin, for the vessel had struck on a reef and turned on its beam ends. It was soon a complete wreck, and the waves breaking over it washed away most of the crew and passengers. A few were left, and when the storm cleared away they could see people on the shore, and boats passing to and fro, but no one heard their cries or saw their signals. One or two attempted to reach the land by swimming, but were carried away by the current; others perished from exhaustion. The captain and Mr. Jones were the last to die. The death of the latter was in keeping with his Christian character and the faith he had delighted to preach to the dusky congregations under his care. Three times he exclaimed "Come, Lord Jesus," and then, with "Glory, glory, glory" on his lips, went to his everlasting rest. Only Mrs. Jones was left. After being for four days exposed to wind, and wave, and scorching sun, without a morsel of food, and at times only her head out of the water, she was found on the wreck in a state of insensibility, with the dead body of her husband at her feet. Her bright English comeliness was marred and distorted, her face was black, and she was so changed that her dearest friends failed to recognise her; yet the first thing she said after telling her name was "If you write to my father, say that

I have never regretted engaging in the Mission work."

A worthy coloured man in Demerara told the writer that at the time of the wreck of the *Maria* he was living in St. Christopher's. He spoke of the public services in connection with the District Meeting as having been accompanied by special blessing to the people; and it was noticed that those who set out for Antigua were particularly joyful in the prospect of another year's labour for Christ. Days passed, and there was great anxiety, he said, in St. Christopher's, as nothing was heard of the vessel. At length the sad tidings of the wreck were brought to the island, and he, with others, went over the hills to the seaside, where, with other tokens of the disaster which had drifted on the beach, they saw the body of a little white child, the child of one of the missionaries. The calamity was a terrible one, and the loss to the Methodist Mission in talent and consecrated activity was great, but it was in part compensated by the example of sublime heroism which the missionaries and their wives gave in the presence of death. Almost as calmly as if they had been seated on the verandah of their dwellings, with jasmines blooming or fire-flies dancing about them, they preached Christ to the perishing crew. No murmur came from their lips, and if from the splitting

wreck, and while the waves were hoarsely sounding their doom, they could have spoken to the youth of England, they would not have uttered one warning note against service so fraught with danger. Their cry would rather have been, "Hasten, O hasten, to take the places which we no more may fill. Think no sacrifice too great for such a Master and such a work. It is better to die as we die than not to know the joy of winning souls for the Saviour. The sea is dark and stormy around us, but from the heavens we hear the voice of Jesus, saying, 'Lo, I am with you.'"

In sailing towards Barbadoes, we pass St. Christopher's, an island aptly described by Dr. Hannah as having "its grand central mountain, with summit buried in clouds, and base beautifully surrounded by towns and villages." Dominica, St. Lucia, and two French islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique, are also in the line of the voyage. Martinique charms the eye with lovely vistas of cultivated ground and luxuriant woods, which overhang the sea; nor does it lack historic interest, for it is linked with the name of Josephine, the first French empress, who from her simple home among its palms, was raised up to be mistress of the Tuileries and St. Cloud, where for a time she moved in splendour amid the marble, and the gold, and the pictured panels. St. Lucia is distinguished by its two sugar-loaf

mountains, which rise abruptly from the sea to an immense height. Some sailors once attempted to scale one of those mountains : only one reached the top, and he was seen waving his arms and then falling as if stricken with death. It was supposed that he and the others had been bitten by the deadly snakes which abound in the island.

The first view of Barbadoes which the voyager obtains is a dim outline of its somewhat low range of hills. As the vessel glides along, the land becomes more distinct, and shows itself in softly-blending tints of blue and green. Soon the vegetation is apparent, the white sands of the beach are visible, and "little England," as its people love to call it, glistens in the sunshine like a graven emerald set in pearl and sapphire. There is nothing wild or rugged, and the general features of the scenery are such as to suggest an English county grown over with tropical trees and plants. Bridgetown, with its churches, chapels, public buildings, numerous houses, and interspersed foliage, curves along the margin of Carlisle Bay, the waters of which are lively with merchant-ships and gay boats that give their white sails to the balmy winds. The forest which originally covered the island has disappeared, with the exception of some relics of it which are to be found in deep gullies and on a hill-side in a district called Scotland. In



NATIVE HOUSE.

some of the gardens there are banyan trees, not on such a scale of magnificence as in the East, but such as, with branching arms and multiplied stems, form pleasant natural arbours. Montgomery Martin says, "The early discovery of Barbadoes is involved in obscurity; the island remained unknown and unnoticed for a century after the discoveries of Columbus, and the first indication of its existence in the charts of European navigators was A.D. 1600. It is said to have been first visited by the Portuguese, who, finding it uninhabited and rude in appearance, named the isle Los Barbados, or, as some say, in reference to the number of fig trees, which from their spreading branches were likened to luxuriant beards. The original discoverers left some plants and swine on the isle and abandoned it. In 1605, an English ship, the *Olive*, accidentally touched at Barbadoes, landed a part of the crew on the spot where the Hole Town was afterwards built, erected a cross, took possession of the island, and inscribed on several trees, 'James, King of England, and of this island.'" It was not until twenty years after this that any attention was given to Barbadoes. Other sailors having brought reports of its beauty and fertility, it began to be regarded as a desirable possession, and a nobleman obtained a patent to it from James I. Unmindful of his father's act, Charles I.

made a grant of it, with several other islands, to the Earl of Carlisle, but being afterwards pressed by the Earl of Pembroke, gave him a kind of lordship over it. But though it was held by successive proprietors, and though there was a sharp contest for the possession of it between its Royalist inhabitants and the Parliamentary forces, in which the latter were victorious, it has never been under any Government but that of Britain. In one part of the island there are a number of poor white families, descendants of the old colonists, or of those who for political and other offences were transported to the plantations. They bear the marks of physical degradation, and are inferior in sprightliness of intellect to the black people, on whom they look with contempt. Their faces show a ghastly white, ingrained with unsightly freckles; but they pride themselves in their freedom from all taint of African blood, and are so afraid of having their complexion darkened by the sun that they have been seen, when working in their provision grounds, with a cotton mask on their faces, and holding a hoe in one hand and an opened umbrella in the other. Those of the black peasantry who are under the influence of religion evince worthiness of character, and considerable vigour of mind, but their condition generally is one of hopeless poverty. The population has increased beyond the capa-

bilities of the land, every available acre of which is cultivated, and it is said that soil has been laid on some of the rocks that they also may be productive. There are more hands than the work to be done requires, consequently wages are low, and there is not the compensating advantage of food at a nominal cost. Emigration would be a relief, but the people cling to the island, and would rather suffer privation amid the scenes which are so dear to them, than sail to colonies where there is demand for labour, and where wide lands give promise of plenty.

Methodism in Barbadoes was, in the early days of its history, exposed to opposition and persecution. A number of the white inhabitants seem to have thought that their descent from the cavaliers, who were among the first settlers on the island, and their professions of zeal for the Established Church, warranted them in any outrage against the work of God as carried on by Methodist missionaries. They were particularly incensed against Mr. Shrewsbury, on account of the fidelity with which he reproved their vices, and his earnest labours for the enlightenment and conversion of the negroes. Not content with insulting him with jeers and opprobrious epithets as he passed along the streets, these chivalrous and patriotic gentlemen, as they boasted them-

selves to be, threw bottles containing lamp-oil, assafoetida, and aquafortis at the preacher and people when they were quietly assembled in the chapel for worship. On another occasion, with masks on their faces, and armed with swords and pistols, they invaded the chapel. Pistols were fired, and a cracker was thrown in the expectation that it would set the dresses of the females in a blaze, and cause a confusion in which the missionary could have been killed; but their murderous intentions were happily frustrated by the providence of God. But it was not enough for those white men to frighten and endanger the congregation, and one Sabbath evening they broke into the chapel, shattered the lamps, pews, and pulpit, and tore down part of the wall. Having made a wreck of the chapel they entered the Mission house, from which Mr. and Mrs. Shrewsbury had escaped into the country. They went from room to room destroying the furniture and throwing the missionaries' books out of the window. In respect to the books those zealous friends of the Church did not show much discrimination, for Butler's *Analogy* and Pearson *On the Creed* shared the same fate as Wesley's *Sermons* and Fletcher's *Checks*. But they were greatly mistaken if they thought that by demolishing the preacher's library they would put an end to his sermonising. He

regretted the loss of his books, but he was too industrious a student not to have got the substance of them safely treasured in his memory. The brotherhood of the mask and the pistol met the following night, and, eager to prove themselves "able architects of ruin," razed the chapel to its foundations. Having done that, they threw the stones into the sea, as if it were a pollution of the land for any fragment of a Methodist chapel to remain on it. So decidedly was Mr. Shrewsbury's life menaced, and so powerless or unwilling were the authorities to protect him, that he found it necessary to embark with his wife on a vessel bound for St. Vincent's. Soon after landing Mrs. Shrewsbury gave birth to a son, whom in memory of their sorrows the parents named Jeremiah. Not in vain did they dedicate their son to God, for he grew up to adopt their faith, and to strive for the religious experience which solaced them in their trials; and after some years of excellent service as a local preacher in Barbadoes was accepted as a Wesleyan minister, and was one of the writer's colleagues in Demerara. It does not become us to be too confident in speaking of calamities which overtake the wicked as judgments from God, but it is a significant fact that many, if not all, the men who took part in the work of persecution and destruction, came to a

bad end, some perishing by accident and others committing suicide.

“ But he upon whose head all scorn was heaped,
Had high reward even while he stayed on earth.
His after years were as the storied blocks
Of marble and of jasper grandly set
In some great arch of triumph ; and he went,
Laden with trophies, on his heavenward way ;
Yet not without sweet flowers about his steps,
Sweet flowers of filial love ; for those who died
In sacred tents pitched by the Syrian brooks,
Or in the shade of Egypt's painted walls,
The Israelitish fathers, were not more
Revered by sons and daughters, than was he
By those who hold, in their descent from him,
A loftier honour than was ever shown
On panels or on banners of proud earls
All flushed with Norman blood. Upheld by hands
Made soft by tenderest love, his passing hence
Was peaceful as the fading of a star
When the broad day begins, and now his soul
Keeps glorious jubilee before the throne ;
And where the wicked sought to crush his life,
His name and work are radiant as the wave
Which, in the ship's track, glows with wondrous fire
When night is on the sails ; while every stone
Torn down by wrath of man has been replaced
By thousands dear to servants of the Lord.”

When the chapel was demolished, Mrs. Gill, a widow, and not the less a noble Christian lady because she had a dark face, opened her house to the people for religious meetings. She was threatened with ruin to the house if she turned it

into a Methodist conventicle, but she was resolved on doing what she regarded as her duty and privilege, irrespective of consequences to her property. The magistrates forbade the gatherings for singing and prayer, but she arranged to have communion with the members by twos and threes. The "lovers of religion," as they called themselves, were angry enough that a coloured woman should dare to withstand them, and as they were restrained from doing any real damage to her, they indulged in the small gratification of burning her in effigy. Days of peace followed the storm ; another chapel was built, which in the course of years became too small for the congregation, and was superseded by one that will hold nearly two thousand people. It was opened in 1856, and Mrs. Gill, in extreme age, but with undiminished delight in the prosperity of God's cause, attended the dedicatory services. When so enfeebled as to be compelled almost constantly to keep her bed, she was helped, on the Sabbath day, to her window, which was opposite the chapel, that she might listen to the sermon, and the last she heard in that way was from the writer. Seldom have the graces of religion been more beautifully exemplified in old age than by this excellent woman. Her chamber was fragrant with the airs of the land Beulah ; her thin, worn face had on it a perpetual radiancy ;

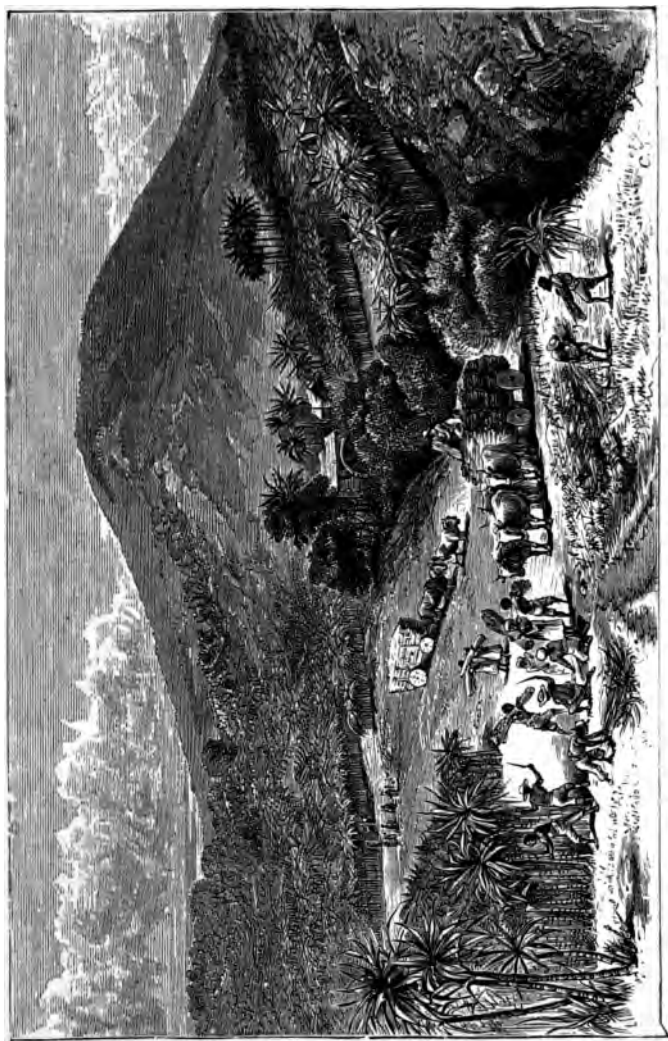
her soul was serenely joyful, and praise was almost constantly on her lips. Methodism in Barbadoes has been favoured with the prayers and labours of a succession of devoted, and in the truest sense "honourable women;" but Mrs. Gill, faithful in tribulation, gladly enduring reproach for the sake of Christ, and watching over the people with loving solicitude when their pastor had to leave them to escape the violence of wicked men, is entitled to the ancient eulogy, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

There are now two chapels in Bridgetown—one called Bethel, the other known as the James-street Chapel. The former is an attempt at Gothic architecture, but is more massive than graceful, having been built so as to resist the effect of hurricanes and earthquakes. The interior is neat and spacious, and has been the scene of numerous manifestations of Divine power and glory. The congregation at the James-street Chapel, the one to which reference was made in connection with Mrs. Gill, is very large, and it is inspiring to the preacher to hear the swell of the hymn as it rises from the vast multitude, and to see so many dark yet intelligent faces expressing joy in the Word of God as it is announced from the pulpit. Ebenezer is one of the principal country stations. The chapel is not in a village, but is central to a number of little

settlements extending over a radius of several miles. Those of the people who have to come from a distance bring their families in rude carts drawn by oxen. They have provisions with them, and it is pleasing to see them seated in groups in the shadow of the chapel wall, or under the branches of the trees, in the hour between morning and afternoon service. It is still more pleasing to see them in the chapel, with their hymn-books and Bibles, with which they are evidently familiar. They are a lively people, and kindle into enthusiasm as the preacher becomes more and more animated, shouting in their joy of heart. Almost every sentence is followed by a general burst of praise to God, and the chapel rings with hallelujahs. The formalist, intent on bringing down the proceedings of the sanctuary to an orderly tameness, would be offended by those demonstrations of feeling, but a man with fire in his soul has sympathy with the gladness of the people, and remembers in their justification the old command to "shout unto the Lord with a voice of triumph."

Tobago, on account of the gloomy grandeur of its northward precipices, has been called "The Melancholy Isle." Those dark, stern heights, unenlivened by a sign of human habitation, have a sombre effect on the mind. But steep, desolate ruggedness is not the prevailing characteristic of

the island. It has landscapes magnificent as the eye can desire, and, standing on the ridge of one of its central hills, we see the blue waters on either side, and lovely valleys and wooded elevations between. The scenery is such as to afford scope for every variety of mind: the geologist could busy himself with the coral-line and volcanic formations; the artist, by copying the beauty of outline and colour, could produce pictures that would be worthy of a place in the most famous galleries; the poet could find imagery with which to give surpassing splendour to his lines; while the man of devout sentiment, looking on the tokens of creative majesty around him, would be compelled to cry out, "In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills *is* His also. The sea *is* His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry *land*." Scarborough, the chief town of the island, is on a conical hill, crowned with an old fort, the possession of which was at one time keenly contested by the French and English. Part of it is now used as a police-station, and for many years there has been no fire from its battery excepting on Royal birthdays and like occasions. The Methodist Mission house stands about half-way up the hill. The view from the front windows is very beautiful. Between slopes variegated with fields of sugar-



SUGAR-CANE PLANTATION.

cane and wild woodland, there is a bay, the azure waters of which are gently dimpled by the tide, or smooth as to recall the sea of crystal in the Apocalypse. The bay opens into a fine sweep of sea, there stretching beyond the reach of vision, and here bounded by the coast of Trinidad. When the sun is sinking in the west, and especially when the atmosphere is slightly humid, the appearance of that island as seen from Tobago is wonderfully gorgeous. The bold headlands and lofty peaks are so resplendent with hues of jasper, and beryl, and amethyst, as to suggest the porches and roofs of a great palace decorated with the spoils of suns and planets. Nor is Trinidad, when visited, found unworthy the admiration it excites when seen at a distance. There is an uneasy swell on the sea, but the ship keeps on her course to the Serpent's Mouth, an entrance to the Gulf of Paria, formed by rocks which stand as enormous obelisks sculptured by the waves, between Trinidad and the South American Continent. That stern sea-portal was named by Columbus the Serpent's Mouth because of his feelings of horror as he looked on those huge masses towering above his topsails, and felt the force of the current against which it was difficult to urge his vessel. When we get through the Serpent's Mouth we gaze with delighted eyes on a scene to which justice could only be done by the

pencil of a Turner or the pen of a Ruskin. The waters of the Gulf spread out in a broad sheet of sapphire. On the one hand are the blue mountains of Cumana, in South America ; on the other hand there is Trinidad, its heights reared grandly against the sky, its romantic slopes and fairy glades luxuriant with cane-fields and cacao plantations ; the latter screened from the sun by the stately Bois Immortale, which from its branches flashes crimson splendour on the air. In the gulf are tiny islets that dip their foliage in the waters and rise in gentle acclivities streaked with flowers and shady with enwoven boughs. No one can look on Trinidad, broken as it is into every shape of beauty and majesty, watered by sparkling rivers, and glowing with the varied colours of a profuse vegetation, without admitting that it has been rightly named "The Indian Paradise." But the Protestant is saddened by the reflection that, though Trinidad is a British colony, having been taken from the Spaniards by Sir Ralph Abercromby in 1797, so many of its people continue to show the effect of Spanish ascendancy by their adherence to the superstitions, and their delight in the tawdry pageants of Popery. Happily there are centres of evangelical light on the island, and perhaps it is not a vain hope that the truth will yet be apprehended by its inhabitants, and that a pure religion

will one day heighten the enchantments of its magnificent scenery.

Tobago was discovered by Columbus in 1496, and was occupied and reoccupied by different European powers until 1793, when it was captured by British forces, and remained from that time under the British Government. It is said that a description of it suggested to Defoe the romantic features of the island which he has pictured as the domain of Robinson Crusoe; and there is a tradition that a man lived in solitude for many years in a cave on its beach. But Tobago has a higher honour in the fact that it is associated with the fame of Montgomery, the sweet singer of Sheffield. His parents laboured there in the Moravian Mission. His mother sickened and died, and as there was at that time no Protestant burial-ground, she was interred in the garden attached to the Mission house; his father went to Barbadoes, where he also died in the service of Christ.

“ My father, mother, parents now no more !
 Beneath the Lion-star they sleep,
 Beyond the western deep,
 And when the sun's noon-glory crests the waves,
 He shines without a shadow on their graves.”

The Mission they commenced in Tobago was abandoned for several years; but in 1825 when there was a public demonstration in honour of

their gifted son, a number of ladies subscribed the sum of £200 for the purpose of renewing the Mission, at the same time expressing the wish that it should be called Montgomery. The above sum, added to a bequest by a gentleman in Tobago, was used in the erection of premises suitable for missionary operations. Chapel, school-houses, and residences stand on a hill commanding a view which would have been a delight to the poet's eyes, including a sweep of land, Arcadian in its gentle curves and soft colouring, a dark belt of wood, and a stretch of bright sea gently ruffled by the passing breeze. The Moravian missionaries in Tobago, being frequently from Germany, find too many difficulties in the idiom and pronunciation of the English language to be very effective as preachers, but they are diligent in pastoral work and specially attentive to their schools, which at one time were decidedly the best in the island. In their public service, which though simple is largely liturgical, they maintain the order on which Mr. Wesley insisted, the men sitting together in one part, and the women sitting together in another part of the chapel. It must be confessed that it is somewhat odd to look from the pulpit, and to see on the right hand five hundred heads with woolly crowns, and on the left hand five hundred heads wrapped in handkerchiefs gay with pink and

crimson stripes. There is a laudable endeavour to give family feeling and joyful tone to the church gatherings; love-feasts are held, and on certain Sabbaths all the people are clothed in white. The Moravian brethren, animated by the spirit which long since gave glory and consecration to Herrnhut, have accomplished a good work in Tobago; thousands of souls have been raised from a degrading Obeahism to the dignity of Christian faith by their instrumentality, and even white men who have no regard for religion appreciate their influence on the moral character of the negroes under their care.

There is a plain but substantial Methodist chapel in Scarborough. It is well attended, and in proof of the esteem in which Methodism is held in the town, it may be mentioned that in addition to a number of merchants, the Governor, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer, members of the Executive Council, and of the House of Assembly, have been seen at the service on the Sabbath evening. For that and other tokens of good-will shown by the community, Methodism was in great measure indebted to an English gentleman who had the courage to identify himself with the society, and to avow the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, when it was deemed a degradation for a white man to be a Methodist, and when the

majority of the colonists lived as if the Decalogue had no application to life in the West Indies. By his high position in the legislature and his commercial integrity and success, combined with breadth of intellect, eloquence of speech, and a noble bodily presence, he ensured a respectful bearing towards Methodism on the part of members who otherwise would have retained their prejudices against it as being vulgar and fanatical. The society, though not large, was distinguished by the deep and consistent piety of many of its members, and it was very pleasant to sit with them and listen to their affectionate reminiscences of ministers through whose labours they or their friends had been brought to the knowledge of the truth. Nelson, Stephenson, and other worthy names made a light in their memory bright as that of the sun on the waters of the Bay, and the missionary could not hear of the sayings and doings of the men thus honoured without determining by the help of God to resemble them in the ardour of their evangelical toil.

Mason Hall is one of the most important of the country stations. The chapel, which is built of timber, stands on an elevated site about five miles from Scarborough. The writer has many gratifying recollections of rides there in the calm afternoon, when the branches of the cocoa-nut and the

fronds of gigantic ferns were portrayed in beautiful shadows on the road, and a golden splendour was transfused into the green of the landscape. Nor was the ride back but little less delightful ; the sky above the shadowy hills was gorgeous with stars and planets wonderful in their lustre ; myriads of fire-flies flitted among the foliage and filled the depth of the valleys with their mild illumination ; and if, as frequently happened, the lamps of the mail steamer were seen in the Plymouth Harbour, there was the joyful assurance of letters from England. The leaders at Mason Hall were usually awaiting the arrival of the missionary, for there was always a leaders' meeting before the week-night service, when class moneys were paid in, and reports given of additions to the classes, or charges against unfaithful members examined. The leaders, both male and female, were strict in maintaining the discipline of Methodism, and no minister could have wished for a band of more devoted helpers. Most of them were at one time in slavery, but from the date of their emancipation they had been industrious and thrifty, and had bought land, built comfortable houses, and in other ways improved their circumstances. One of them, Andrew Page, was when young skilful, according to negro estimate, in playing on the violin. He was in great request for dances and

other dissipations, winning by his melodies what to him was a handsome revenue. But Andrew was convinced of sin, found peace, and began to sing the new song ; he would have nothing more to do with profane tunes, and much as he loved his violin he feared that it might bring him into temptation, and broke it in pieces. An Englishman would have made the previously desecrated strings vibrate with the praises of God, but in the West Indies the violin is so associated with low revelry that the sound of it is an offence to a good Methodist ; and Andrew could scarcely have struck a note without feeling that he was endangering his own safety, and exciting scandal against the cause of God.

A little beyond Mason Hall there is a scene truly romantic. A torrent, half veiled by bamboos, comes leaping down a hill-side, a river, broken by rocky ledges into small cataracts, dashes onward in crystal clearness, and in one place the road is on the edge of a precipice, at the bottom of which the river is seen gleaming in silvery light between thickets of entangled vegetation or rushing by boulders, which, wet with spray, have the appearance of burnished opals. About nine miles further in the same direction from Mason Hall is Castara, another country station. The road is seen stretching, like a sinuous thread, along the mountain side.

Passing along that road we come to Mount Dillon, rising in precipitous majesty high above the sea, which sweeps in its blue immensity to the haze of the horizon. From Mount Dillon there is a winding descent like a gigantic stair-way to Castara, a settlement in which the houses are picturesquely situated on knolls and rocky shelves. The missionary who left Scarborough when the musical wrens were welcoming the dawn of the morning, is ready for breakfast by the time he reaches the village, and can do justice to whatever is set before him, whether it be fresh or salt fish, stewed parrot, fowl, or peccairi. Bread he must not look for, but he is thankful for yam or plantain, and he knows that his coffee, if not very clear, is free from adulteration, for the berries were only taken the previous night from the plant. He has scarcely got through his meal when the bell begins to ring for service, and stepping towards the chapel he overtakes little groups of the people, whose faces brighten as they see him, and who greet him with their kindly "Morning, massa." A number of black youths are seated near the pulpit, who look rather formidable with note-book in hand and pencil stuck behind their ears, but when the sermon begins it is found that there is not much cause for alarm, as their reporting does not extend beyond the text. It is necessary to use "the

simplest form of speech " in addressing the company, for though the youths near the pulpit might think themselves learned, and great in literature, on the strength of listening to big words and long sentences ; aged Cudjoe and untaught Quasheba require something they can comprehend without difficulty, and that will strike at once on their hearts. When the sermon is over there are the children who have accumulated since the minister's last visit to be baptised, or the Lord's Supper is administered, or classes are met for the renewal of tickets. These duties ended, Mount Dillon must be climbed, and Mason Hall be reached in time for afternoon service.

Mount Stewart is the station most remote from Scarborough, being about thirty miles away. The ride there is as romantic as any on the island. In some places the only road is the sea-beach, the sands of which are beaten hard and smooth by the waves, and facilitate a lively canter, which the horse as well as the rider enjoys ; but when the tide is up the waters dash against the horse's legs, the spray at times rises to the saddle, and progress is not so rapid. Rivers have to be crossed, which are dangerous when swollen by heavy rains. In the dry season they are so nearly wasted away that there is but a thin stream rippling to the sea. But when the clouds have emptied themselves on

the mountains, the feeble rill becomes a torrent, tearing trees and huge boulders from the sides of the gullies, and rushing into the sea with such force as to overmaster its waves and keep up a strong current even when far from the land. For a time the river-water refuses to mingle with the sea-water, and a clearly defined ribbon of yellow, as much as a mile in length, may often be seen stretched along the blue of the sea. It is trying to the nerves to ford those rivers when so full and impetuous. Many in attempting to do so have been carried away and been devoured by sharks. For a considerable distance the road to Mount Stewart is on the side of the mountains, and has to accommodate itself to their indentations or protuberances. There is one spot where the indentation is so deep, that though its opening from point to point might be spanned by a bridge a quarter of a mile long, the inward curve necessitates a ride of between two and three miles. What is called Military Road forms a portion of the way that has to be travelled. It is a narrow path that has been blasted and hewn along the front of a sheer precipice. Masses of rock, which do not look at all secure, overhang the path, and it is not without a shudder that we look downward to where the waves break against the base of the precipice, the awfulness of which is unrelieved by any projecting

ledge or slanting buttress. Soon after leaving Military Road we come to a Mission station known as Ebenezer. Some years since a good white man, in comfortable but not affluent circumstances, who had literally built his house on a rock, rendered excellent service to the Mission by his diligence as local preacher, class-leader, and society and chapel steward. He and his coloured wife, a woman of beautiful character, gave generous entertainment to the missionary when he visited Ebenezer. It was a joy to spend the evening with them in their little room, through the open window of which the sea sent its deep music, and to hear their stories of other days, in which the old man specially abounded. Grateful feeling impels the writer to record the name of Collins in connection with Ebenezer. There is now a Wesleyan minister resident on that station, and though "remote from towns" and the excitements of an intellectual community, he may be congratulated on healthful breezes, bold scenery, and fine opportunities of improving his mind by reading and meditation. Mount Stewart is about ten miles beyond Ebenezer. The chapel and school-house are on the top of a high mountain; the solitude is complete, for there is no other building near; but the site has the advantage of affording religious teaching for those who

dwell in settlements at the base of the mountain. If the chapel had been near to some of the dwellings, it would have been too far from the others ; but situated on that peak it is a centre to which all the people have access. The air is cool and bracing, and looking in one direction we see another tremendous mountain, dark with woods, in which there is scarcely a track of human footsteps, and often crowned with clouds wild and stormy in their aspect. Looking down the seaward side of the mountain on which we stand, we see it garden-like with cane-plants, which almost touch the beach of Man-of-War Bay, a noble expanse of water, in which whole fleets might anchor with safety, so completely is it sheltered by the hills, which reflect their beauty on its placid surface. A few good and fairly intelligent black men take the lead at the chapel ; but most of those who attend the services are below the ordinary standard of negro enlightenment and civilisation. They are, however, not altogether unconscious of their own deficiencies ; they are anxious for instruction in religious truth, and manifest a laudable desire to have their children properly educated. There are day and Sabbath schools in connection with all the stations in Tobago. On the first day in the New Year there was formerly, and perhaps there may be still, a grand school festival in Scar-

borough. In the morning the scholars came from Mason Hall, Mount St. George, and other villages, and with the Scarborough children assembled in the chapel. After singing hymns and giving recitations, they went in procession through the town, making a gay appearance with their banners and floral decorations. When they reached the market-place they were ranged in a square, and sang—

“ Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy ;
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create, and He destroy.”

The sea, which broke on the rocks close at hand, helped the music with its deep bass, the trade winds as they swayed the branches of the trees seemed to chime with the tune, and it was gratifying to hear those dusky children sing—

“ We'll crowd Thy gates with thankful songs,
High as the heavens our voices raise ;
And earth, with her ten thousand tongues,
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise.”

One of their banners bore the inscription, “ Let Tobago Flourish.” The fact that its children were being trained in the principles of religion was an assurance that the patriotic desire would be realised. It may be too much to hope that Tobago will ever be great in commercial enter-

prise ; that where now the forest-boughs are thick there will be cities graceful with arcade, and statue, and fountain ; that bays now silent will be crowded with ships, and reefs now rugged be hewn into stately piers ; but there may be the less imposing, yet not less real prosperity, that is brought about by the "godliness" that "is profitable unto all things." The instruction given to its children is a pledge that Tobago will be favoured with such prosperity, and that in years to come it will be the home of an industrious, contented, and godly community.

CHAPTER III.

British Guiana.



AFTER a day's sail from Barbadoes a change is noticed in the appearance of the waters, which are no longer a radiant mirror reflecting the glories of the heavens, but dark and turbid as a mountain stream after

heavy rain. This appearance is caused by the soil washed by the great rivers from the South American Continent. The voyager to Guiana finds that when land is in sight there is but little

to gratify the eye. There are no grand hills lifting their foreheads to the heavens, but simply trees sweeping in long lines, and seeming to grow out of the water. There is nothing to vary the prospect, with the exception of the tall chimneys, and the openings into creeks and canals. The coast is low, and though there are a few sand-reefs, it is for the greater part a cheerless waste of mud and swamp, darkened by the somewhat melancholy foliage of the mangrove and the courida. But uninviting as the coast is, it cannot be seen without some elation of feeling, for it is part of South America—that prodigious space of land stretching from Tierra del Fuego, where Richard Williams and his brave companions died in their attempt to win the fierce Patagonians to the Saviour, to the isthmus of Darien, from the mountains of which the Spanish adventurer, Balboa, first saw the Pacific Ocean, and rushing into its waters, with sword and buckler, claimed that unknown sea, with all it contained, for the King of Castille. South America! What space it affords for the growth and expansion of mighty empires. What a magnificent seaboard; what a fertile soil; what mineral wealth! “The stones of it are the place of sapphires, and it hath dust of gold.” But these advantages are, with comparatively slight exceptions, in the hands of a people who are proud, indolent, and superstitious,

and are therefore but imperfectly used. Let the enlightenment, the enterprise which ever accompany the Protestant religion, be put into those favoured regions, and there would soon be a justification of the boast of the great statesman, George Canning, who, in alluding to what he had done to encourage the Spanish Colonies to independence, said, "I have called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old."

The territory known as Guiana lies between the Orinoco and the Amazon, and has an area of eight hundred thousand or nine hundred thousand square miles. The north-western portion is held by the Republic of Venezuela; the south-western forms part of the Brazilian Empire; the remainder is divided by three European Powers — Holland, France, and Great Britain. The measurement of British Guiana is about seventy-six thousand square miles, and consists of three colonies or counties—Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice, thus named after their principal rivers. George Town, the capital of Demerara, is built on the east side, and near the mouth of the river. The stranger who has been unpleasantly impressed by the swampy aspect of the coast is surprised when he lands to find himself not on a dreary mud-bank, haunted by alligators and slimy with the trail of huge serpents, but in a city beautiful as a fairy dream.

The streets are at right angles, and are intersected by canals, some of which have oleanders planted on either side. The houses are built of timber, are painted white, and have verandahs, pleasant to look upon with their green lattice-work and creeping plants. Most of them are detached, and surrounded with numerous trees, such as the palm, the lime, and the orange. With the exception of the Government buildings, the cathedral, and the lighthouse, the places of worship and other public edifices are of wood; stone or brick structures being possible only by sinking piles to a great depth in the soft clay. From the balcony of the lighthouse there is a fine view of the city, which, with its long straight streets, its rich foliage intermingled with the white walls, and the mighty river gliding by the wharves, has a picturesque and romantic appearance.

Though the coast of Guiana is low, so low that the land is only kept from the encroachment of the higher tides by an elaborate system of dykes and embankments, and though so uninviting when seen from the sea, it has, on the landward side of its dismal fringe of mangrove, an interest equalling, if not surpassing, that of the lofty mountain paths and diversified scenery of the islands. The broad level fields of sugar-cane have a rare beauty when every stem is crowned with a light, feathery, lilac-

tinted flower. The provision grounds attract the eye to their glorious pine-apples, their heavy clusters of bananas and plantains, and their mango and orange trees laden with large delicious fruit; while lines of stately palms on each side of the path leading to the planter's house, form a magnificently arched avenue, and bring to mind the words of the Psalmist, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree." The silk-cotton tree is a conspicuous object in the landscape. From a trunk lofty and perpendicular, and almost as white as one of the pillars on the Athenian Acropolis, branches shoot out horizontally, range above range, to an amazing height. This tree is regarded by the natives as the haunt of spirits, and they will walk a long way round rather than pass under its boughs at night. It takes its name from the fine silky cotton which it bears, which, when loosened from its pods, strews the ground as with a light fall of snow. Even the uncultured lands along the coast and up the creeks are not without a charm for the observant eye. The savannahs are of large extent, and the wonder is excited how it is that, while in other places the trees seem to spring spontaneously out of the ground, these expanses should only have their surfaces diversified by scattered thickets of bush. The forests are so matted and overgrown by creepers and

parasites as to have the appearance of ivy-covered ruins ; nor is this their only peculiarity, for the lianas or bush-ropes hang like portions of a ship's rigging from the uppermost boughs of the trees. So dense is the undergrowth of the forest, that a way into it can only be made by the free use of the cutlass ; but, as if Nature resented the intrusion into her secret shrines, the hands and face are tormented by the stings of innumerable mosquitoes. Splendid lilies may be seen on the trenches cut for drainage, and also less welcome objects,—alligators, resting like logs of wood among the thick water foliage,—are often visible. Snakes, some of which are bright and richly coloured as jewelled bracelets, are coiled on the wayside ; lizards rustle among the leaves, and the long-tailed iguana darts from branch to branch. Parasol ants pass in procession, each one bearing a piece of green leaf of the same shape and size, and suggesting, as it has been said, Macduff's soldiers carrying the boughs of Birnam Wood in their march to Dunsinane. Pendent nests, so woven and hung as to be secure from the attack of reptiles, swing gently over the waters ; and birds, gorgeous as shivered rainbows, flash out their glories on the luminous air. The day departs, but the darkness brings a new interest. Huge frogs keep up an incessant concert ; alli-

gators start with a tremendous splash into the trenches, and night birds are on the wing, one of which as it flits past the traveller seems to say, "Who are you?" Fire-flies, with their tiny torches, give a pale light to the scene; pyramids of flame kindle in the distance, where new cane-fields are being prepared by setting fire to the bush or savannah grass; while the almost incessant lightning pours its splendours over the woods of the interior.

The vast extent and richness of Guiana have made it the dwelling of men of many races and many tribes. The names of the estates—English, Scotch, French, Dutch, intimate the varied nationality of the settlers, and their attempt to perpetuate the memory of scenes that were all the lovelier because of the distance by which they were separated from them; and the names of creeks, Mahaica, Mahaiconi, Abari, Canje, carry us back to days when the Red Indians, not yet affrighted by European sails, were lords of the coast. There are few spots more favourable to ethnographical study than the business street of George Town in the early part of the day. Mingling with representatives of the three kingdoms may be seen Portuguese from Madeira and the Azores, copper-coloured Brazilians, Hindoos with the idolatrous marks on their foreheads, the women laden with



STREET SCENE IN DEMERARA.

silver ornaments ; Chinese in the blue dress which is to them almost a national livery ; Jews grand in feature, and bearing, even to this date of their dispersion, the marks of superior ancestry ; creoles of every shade of complexion, from ebony to white ; Red Indians in little groups, who have come to the city to sell the hammocks and baskets they have made in the woods. These races, so varied in colour and garb, form a spectacle of rare interest, whether viewed historically, politically, or religiously. In that crowd the widest extremes of religious belief are to be found ; the purest Christianity and the most debasing idolatry ; the spiritual power of Protestantism and the puerilities of Rome. Happily Protestant Christianity is the prevailing faith of the province ; but for many years after its colonisation there was scarcely a sign of the religion of the countries from which the colonists had sailed. When, in 1803, the Dutch, who had been first in possession of the coast, and under whose care leagues of swamp had assumed the appearance of a garden, ceded the colony to Great Britain, there were but two places of worship—one a Lutheran church in Berbice, the other a Dutch Reformed church on Fort Island—and between the two there was a distance of two hundred miles. Not a roof was reared, not a single minister appointed, for the religious benefit

of the one hundred and fifty thousand slaves who tilled the soil. They were left to their own African superstitions, and to the vices in which they were but too ready to imitate their masters. The fine gold had become dim, and the colonists showed themselves unworthy of the ancestors who smote the pride of Spain in their determination to worship God "in spirit and in truth." On the occupation of the country by the British, a chaplain was appointed to read prayers for the garrison, and such of the white civilians as were disposed to attend. At times there would only be five or six present; but if a black man even looked in at the door he was driven away. The Moravians—a class of men combining the magnificent daring of the Jesuit missionaries with a child-like simplicity of faith and manner—looked with pity on the neglected thousands of Guiana, and in 1738 two of their number attempted the evangelisation of the slaves in Berbice, but not being allowed access to them they went into the wild forest lands of the interior, where they commenced a Mission among the aborigines. Their settlement flourished for a time, and "the sounding aisles of the dim wood rang' with the music of their German hymns; but the Indian congregation was dispersed, as the church and school-house were destroy

during the outbreak of the Berbice negroes in 1763.

The London Missionary Society had the honour of establishing the first Mission for the benefit of the slaves in Guiana. John Smith was the fourth missionary sent out by that society. When nineteen years 'old he was convinced of sin, and obtained peace with God while listening to a sermon preached by Dr. Leifchild, from the words, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found ; call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." The preacher's remarks on the clause, "He will abundantly pardon," sent gladness into his troubled heart, and he was able to confide in the mercy of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. Soon after this change in his relationship to God, he was stricken down by a painful sickness, which continued for eleven weeks. At times there was scarcely any hope of his recovery, but when near to death he vowed that if God would spare his life he would give himself thoroughly to His service. When restored to health he began to labour in a Sabbath-school, but a wider field of usefulness opened before him, and after a suitable training he was sent as a mis-

sionary to Demerara. Two days after his arrival he waited on the Governor, who asked him how he purposed instructing the negroes. On hearing from him that he wished to teach them to read, to give them lessons in Dr. Watts' Catechisms, and to preach the Gospel to them in a plain manner, His Excellency, in the sternest tone he could command, said, "If ever you teach a negro to read, and I hear of it, I will banish you from the colony immediately." The planters were, as a rule, opposed to the instruction of the slaves, deeming it more desirable that they should be kept in brutishness and superstition than that they should receive the enlightenment of the Gospel. They had the feeling that if those wretched creatures, whom they had treated with no more consideration than they did the cattle on their estates, once rose to the dignity of Christian men, they would not long be able to hold them in thralldom. They could not think of those swarthy faces irradiated with the light of intellect without being alarmed for their own interests, and in every note of psalmody and every manly sentiment that came from those dark lips they heard the nearing doom of the institution in which they found gratification for their avarice and cruelty. The editor of their own organ, *The Colonist*, said, "The missionary system is undermining the institutions, and endan-

gering the political existence of the colonies. It is most unfortunate for the cause of the planters that they did not speak out in time. They did not say as they ought to have said to the first advocates of Missions and education, we shall not tolerate your plans till you prove to us that they are safe and necessary; we shall not suffer you to enlighten our slaves, who are by law our property, till you can demonstrate that when they are made religious and knowing, they will still continue to be our slaves. We have no desire to treat the Africans with undue rigour, but we cannot be ignorant that our power over them can exist only as long as we are more highly educated and enlightened." The condition of the slaves in Demerara was certainly such as to need the alleviations of religion; and the following, from a letter written by John Smith, shows that it was no imaginary evil which excited the indignation of our fathers, and urged them to the noble strife which issued in the abolition of slavery in all the dominions of Britain. "The plantation slaves are, of course, employed in the cultivation of the ground. The field then is their place of work. At about six o'clock in the morning the ringing of a bell, or the sound of a horn, is the signal for them to turn out to work. No sooner is this signal made than the black drivers, loudly smacking their

whips, visit the negro houses to turn out the reluctant inmates, much in the same manner that you would drive out a number of horses from a stable-yard, now and then giving a lash or two to any that are tardy in their movements. Issuing from their kennels nearly naked, with their implements on their shoulders, they stay not to muster, but immediately proceed to the field, accompanied by the drivers and a white overseer. The former remain with them all day; the latter is not so confined to the spot, but he can leave them occasionally. When it can be done a task is given them, which they must accomplish on pain of punishment. In the middle of the day they are usually allowed about an hour and a half for rest and refreshment; but when they have task-work not more than half the gang are able to avail themselves of this intermission from labour. Soon after sunset they leave off work in the field; and each one having cut or picked a bundle of grass for the master's horses, which serves instead of hay, they bend their course homewards. They all carry the grass to a certain spot, forming a general muster; and there remain in the open air shivering with cold, till the cracking of the whip informs them that they are to take it to the stable, which is generally about eight o'clock. If there be no other work to do they may then go to their

houses. I say if there be no other work ; for after toiling all day many of the slaves are compelled to work nearly half the night, especially when they are making sugar, which is six months out of the twelve." Punishments were frequent and severe, and for trifling offences women, as well as men, were flogged without the slightest regard for feeling or decency. Slaves were seen with the skin torn off their backs ; and one stormy night the missionary counted over one hundred and forty lashes as he heard them in the intervals of the thunder. The cruelties perpetrated on the plantations drew the attention of the Home Government, and in the year 1823 an order in council was forwarded to Demerara, in which among other provisions for ameliorating the condition of the slaves, it was required that the hours of labour should not be so prolonged, and that the flogging of females should at once and for ever be discontinued. The order was not put in force by the colonial authorities ; but the people heard that the King and Parliament had devised measures for their benefit, and from this rumour they got the notion that they were to be free. Thinking that their masters were keeping them in slavery when they had no further claim to their services, they rose in rebellion. Their rebellion, however, was not fierce and sanguinary, like that which made such havoc

in St. Domingo ; no buildings were fired, and the negroes manifested more of grim humour than vindictiveness in their treatment of the planters, putting them in the stocks, or dipping them in the muddy trenches. But this rude play did not last long ; the colony was placed under martial law ; many of the revolted slaves lost their lives in a vain attempt to resist the soldiery ; some were seized and shot without a trial ; others were executed and hung in chains by the side of the road. The rising was foolish and unjustifiable, but the retribution far exceeded the offence ; and educated Englishmen showed themselves more barbarous than untutored Africans. At the time of the outbreak John Smith was in a delicate state of health, and the doctor advised him to go to the Bermudas for change of air. But a lot awaited him different to that of an invalid's rest in those "summer isles of Eden, lying in dark purple spheres of sea." On account of not having come forward to serve in the militia, a duty from which he was legally exempted by his profession, his house at Le Resouvenir was beset by a party of soldiers, and with oaths and threats he and his wife were arrested and taken to George Town. They were confined in a small garret in the Colony House, where they suffered severely from the sweltering heat of the sun on the roof. For seven weeks they were not

allowed the use of pen and ink ; and such were the precautions taken to prevent the escape of the missionary, or, rather, the mean endeavours to aggravate the rigour of his imprisonment, that a sentry stood constantly at his door, which he was not allowed to close, and every two hours both day and night he had to intimate by his answer to the call of the sentry that he was safe within. While in prison a charge was brought against him of having been an accomplice in the riot. The only evidence that could be adduced in support of the charge, with the exception of what was suborned, was that he had heard some vague words from a negro named Quamina. He was tried by a court martial and sentenced to be hung, a sentence denounced by Brougham and Mackintosh, in the House of Commons, as a crime against justice. But those who doomed him to the hangman dared not go so far as to send him to the scaffold ; he was recommended to mercy, and the case was forwarded to the Home Government. A free pardon was granted by the King, but before it reached Demerara the prisoner was set free by an arm mightier than that of man. His wife was liberated at the time of the trial, and he was taken from the Colony House to the gaol, where he was thrown into a wretched room over stagnant water, which sent up its foul miasma between the boards of the floor. Already enfeebled by disease, he was

unable to resist the effects of the damp air and the poisonous vapours, and in sure hope of immortality his soul escaped from the violence of the persecutor and the gloom of the dungeon.

“ Not by the slave-lord’s justice slain,
That doomed him to a traitor’s death ;
While royal mercy sped in vain,
O’er land and sea, to spare his breath :
But the frail life that warmed his clay
Man could not give, nor take away.

“ His vengeance and his grace, alike,
Were impotent to save or kill ;
He may not lift his sword to strike,
Nor turn its edge aside at will :
Here by one Sovereign act and deed,
God cancell’d all that man decreed.”

Mrs. Smith was forbidden by the Governor to follow the body of her husband to the grave, and told that if she did so she would be arrested. But in her heart affection was stronger than fear, and, accompanied by a female friend and a black man, who carried a lantern, she glided through the darkness, and was present at the burial, which took place between three and four o’clock in the morning. Soon after this strange funeral, two negroes, who were members of the deceased minister’s congregation, began to form a neat enclosure about the grave. One of the Government officials hearing of this gave immediate orders for the railing to be torn down and the brick-work to be removed.

But though a paltry maliciousness might destroy the simple monument set up by loving hands, it could not stay the progress of those principles of truth and righteousness for which the departed missionary had contended in life and death. The shadow of the Trinity Wesleyan Chapel, a large and not ungraceful building, falls on his grave; and behind a row of beautiful palms, in one of the finest streets of the city, there is a noble set of Mission premises, belonging to the London Missionary Society, by which the memory of his name and martyrdom is worthily perpetuated. While in prison he was compelled by his persecutors to draw a bill on the society to defray the expenses of his trial. Several years after, the secretary of the society, while arranging some old documents, met with this bill. His attention was drawn to some minute marks in one corner, and on closely examining them saw that they were 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Turning to the text thus indicated he found the words, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." A comparatively young and unknown advocate undertook the defence of Mr. Smith before the court martial; he prospered in his profession; gratefully ascribed his prosperity to the blessing of God following his efforts on behalf

of the persecuted missionary, and died a few years since as Sir William Arrindell, Chief Justice of British Guiana.

In the year 1805, the Rev. J. Hawkshaw, a Wesleyan minister, who had been labouring in Dominica, visited Demerara, and calling on the Governor informed him that his intention in coming to the colony was to instruct the negroes in the principles of Christianity. "If that be what you have come to do," was the reply, "you must go back. I cannot let you stay here, and therefore you had better return in the mail-boat." Had Mr. Hawkshaw laid before His Excellency a plan for getting more work out of the negroes, or for ensuring their continuance in slavery, he would have been heartily welcomed to the Government House; but to think of instructing them in the principles of Christianity was little less than a crime, and the prompt decision was, "I cannot allow you to stay here." After this repulse, a Methodist Mission to the people of Demerara was not again attempted until the year 1815, when the Rev. T. Talboys began the work which has proved so great a blessing to the colony. Methodism has expanded to large proportions in George Town, and has a line of societies along the coast, and for thirty miles up the river, and it is possible that it will double its strength in the

next fifty years ; but it can never be unmindful of its obligations to Thomas Talboys, whose labour, beset by contempt and persecution, was the beginning of unspeakable benefits to the people of the province. When eighteen years old he enlisted into the army, and after a time was sent with his regiment to the West Indies. There he was convinced of sin, and being ignorant of the way of salvation, allowed himself to be influenced by Romanists. But neither at mass or in the confessional could he find relief for his trouble. Notwithstanding priestly magic and absolution, he still felt the pressure of guilt on his conscience, and having purchased his discharge from the army returned to England. He was induced to attend a Methodist class-meeting, and soon rejoiced in the consciousness that his sins were pardoned, and that he was righteous in the sight of God. He began to preach, became a candidate for the ministry, was accepted by the Conference, and appointed to the West Indies. With joy in his heart, and words of life on his tongue, he revisited the scenes of his previous doubts and fears. He was still to be a soldier in that golden clime, not armed with bayonet and marching to the music of drum and fife, but bearing the sword of the Spirit, and the banner "displayed because of the truth," and animated to bold endeavour by the

voice of Jesus, in whose name he was prepared to "endure hardness," and to suffer the scorn of ungodly men. He had the heroism needful for Evangelical enterprise in Demerara, and overcame difficulties from which a man of more timid soul would have shrunk in despair.

A few years after the Mission had been originated two of the missionaries were stricken with yellow fever and died. Their widows were taken by the Rev. John Smith to his house, at Le Resouvenir, where they received all the solace that kindly Christian hearts could give. But though workmen were buried the work still went on, and among those who rendered effective service to the cause of God, the Rev. John Mortier is entitled to honourable distinction. In his obituary in the Minutes of Conference for 1850 it is said, "His labours were owned of God in the islands of Nevis, St. Vincent's, Grenada, and St. Kitt's; but it was in the colony of Demerara that he chiefly exercised his useful ministry. For seventeen years he devoted himself to the spiritual interests of the inhabitants of that important and populous region. He was there during the period of the Rev. Mr. Smith's imprisonment and death; and he deeply sympathised with that injured man of God. Both before and after the date of emancipation, he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all classes of

the people, and 'was the honoured instrument of gathering many hundreds of precious souls into the fold of Christ, as well as of erecting several spacious chapels for the increasing congregations."

The principal Mission building, situated in the district of George Town, known by the old Dutch designation of 'Werk-en-rust, or Work-and-rest, and still used as a schoolroom and teacher's house, was so arranged that the lower part served as the chapel, and the upper part as the missionary's residence. It was a structure betokening the day of feeble things, and having become too small for the requirements of the society and congregation, it was superseded by the present noble Trinity Chapel, which, with the aid of the devoted people on the spot, and of friends in England, was built by the Rev. William Hudson. The work was still further developed by the Rev. J. Bickford, now one of the princes of Australian Methodism, and the Rev. J. Corlett, who was not less distinguished by his laborious care of the country stations than by the powerful oratory which competent judges declare to have been almost equal to that of Dr. Beaumont. At times his allusions to science and history, though appreciated by merchants and members of the Court of Policy, were beyond the comprehension of the greater number in the congregation, but all felt

the authority of a master, and the large warm heart of a friend, in the portly man flashing and storming in the pulpit.

In 1856, when the Rev. Messrs. Barley and Greathead were stationed in George Town, there was a wonderful revival of religion. It began with a desire on the part of the ministers in the colony to accomplish more for Christ, and with the earnest pleadings of the people for an outpouring of the Spirit. The leaders in George Town, both male and female, were most of them mighty in prayer. Though they were uneducated, their prayers were characterised by propriety of language, aptness of Scriptural quotation, strong confidence in the prevalence of Christ's intercession, and impassioned feeling. It was almost an inspiration to hear them after the Sabbath evening service, as they translated the thoughts of the sermon into urgent supplications, and to be with them at the early week morning or week evening prayer-meetings, when heaven seemed to open above them, and great grace was upon all present. The heightened zeal of the leaders influenced the societies, and members who had left their first love were seen bowing before God in penitence, and then rising up with a new light on their faces and a glad song on their lips. Then a wider circle was affected, sinners were

awakened, and there was scarcely a service that was not followed by conversions. A missionary, on the evening of his twenty-third birthday, preached to a crowded congregation in the Kingston Chapel, now the head of a circuit. The subject was a solemn one, and the people listened as if every word had been emphasised by the thunders of Horeb. The service was continued by a prayer-meeting, and those who were seeking mercy were invited to come forward to the communion rail. All over the chapel there were those who rose from their seats, pew doors were opened by trembling hands, and in a few moments, not one, but two rows of penitents, were kneeling round the rail, and numbers in the aisles were confessing their sins and pleading for pardon. As the young man looked on that sight—the throng of dark faces streaming with tears, or suddenly brightening with unutterable joy—he thought he was having a glorious birthday celebration. But the work was not confined to George Town; the wave of Divine influence swept over the colony; and there was not a village on the coast, or hidden away among the trees by the river-side, in which the triumphs of Immanuel were not multiplied. In a few months a thousand members were added to the societies; congregations were so increased as to necessitate the enlargement of old, or the building of new

chapels, and ministers and people rejoiced in the fulness of blessing. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them; the Lord hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad."

At the latter end of the year of revival people were whispering to each other, "The cholera has come!" The disease was ravaging Venezuela, and it was supposed that it was brought to Demerara by a vessel from that territory. Many fell before it, both in town and country. Among the first victims was a woman, who was seized near the Trinity Chapel; the seizure proved fatal; her brother followed her to the grave, and on the afternoon of the same day he also was carried there. A strong and healthy young man left George Town by the train, and went on to the terminus at Victoria. He rode thence towards Mahaica, but began to suffer on the way, and when he got near the Mahaica Mission house, threw himself from his horse, in an agony of pain, and was taken to the police-station, where he died in a few hours. One night a missionary was asked to visit a black boy, who was supposed to be dying. His cheeks had fallen in, his eyes were ghastly, and all the symptoms of death were about him. But the little fellow was not afraid to die; he said he

wanted nothing more in this world, and that he was going to paradise to be with Jesus. Unexpectedly he recovered, but a heavy sorrow awaited the little household to which he belonged. A brother, who had called the missionary to him, and the mother of the family were laid in the same grave at the same time. The missionary felt for the bereaved husband and father, as he saw him standing by the grave, and gave him a few words of comfort; but his bereavements were not then ended, and before sunset he had to attend the burial of his mother. Soon after that, one of his children, who had been taken to a neighbouring village, died, and the following week one of his brothers died. One morning, about four o'clock, the missionary was awoke by a loud rapping on the verandah. Two black youths informed him that their father, who was dying, wished to see him. With as little delay as possible he went with them along the dim star-lit path. Only a few steps had been taken, when a loud wail burst from the house, and the youths exclaimed, "He's dead." Still they wished the missionary to go forward, and having crossed the deep trench on a narrow bending plank, he entered the house, a frail erection of wattles plastered with mud. The dead man was before him on the earthen floor, a sight horrible to the eye, as seen in the gleam of a

flickering light ; the dark complexion suffused with sepulchral green, the cheeks sunken, the eyes wide open, but showing only a livid white. A brother of the deceased man, who was present, was concerned on account of there being no will, and wanted the missionary to make one. He was not fraudulent but ignorant, and it was with difficulty he could be convinced that such an action would be a violation of truth, as well as of the law of the land. During the time of the cholera, an intelligent black man heard a sermon from one of the ministers. A few days after he was called to some employment, at Craig village, up the Demerara. The people there were suffering from the epidemic ; he was anxious about the souls of the dying, and endeavoured to instruct and comfort them by repeating those portions of the sermon which had been impressed on his memory. His effort was not in vain, for a number of those who died were cheered by the presence of Christ, and by a hope of heaven. Nearly all the inmates of one house were swept away, but their death was peaceful and blessed ; and one aged woman spent her last breath in referring to words the good man had quoted from the sermon. After some weeks the plague abated, but sad vacancies in many households, and rows of graves in many burial-grounds, testified of its fatal effects.

There is much that is encouraging to the servants of Christ in Demerara. The people are earnest, affectionate, and liberal. They gladly assist in Evangelistic work, and give freely of their earnings for the support of the different institutions of Methodism. The record of a Sabbath's labour in one of the country circuits may not be without interest, and in giving it, the writer, for the sake of convenience, will speak in the first person. I lived at Golden Grove, a village near the sea, and named after the seat of Lord Carbery, where Jeremy Taylor wrote some of his learned and gorgeous discourses. Though the Golden Grove in Demerara is not like that in Wales, set amid the beautiful scenery of hills and valleys, I had the advantage of a healthful sea-breeze, and could look from the verandah on a long level sweep of rich vegetation. At the back of the house there was a wood stretching to the beach ; on either side there were cocoa-nut and orange trees, and the broad leaves of the plantain and the banana, and in front the cottages of the people. Wrens built their nests under the eaves of the verandah, and filled the house with their melody ; but it was still more pleasing to hear on a Sabbath morning the hymns which rung from dwelling to dwelling, till all the village seemed one joyful orchestra. The inhabitants, with few exceptions,

were Methodists, and no one could have wished to be associated with a more orderly, generous, and affectionate people. In illustration of their kindly feeling for the missionary, I may mention that one family supplied me with milk, another with sugar, another with vegetables, and if I expostulated with them on account of the profusion of their gifts, their reply was, "Massa, me only do my duty." On the Saturday afternoon previous to the Sabbath I am about to describe I left Golden Grove for Mahaica, where I spent the night with my friend, the Rev. S. Brown. When missionaries meet they never lack topics for conversation: there is the state of the work on the different stations, there is the last Methodist news in the *Watchman* or *Recorder*, and there are the new books from the Book Room.

I rose early on the Sabbath morning, and set out for Mahaicony, crossing the Mahaica Creek on a long wooden bridge, covered with a roof to protect it from the heavy rains. The road is along a flat country, but had I needed any interest beyond that of my work, I could have found it in the exuberance of vegetable and animal life. Flowers were thick on the roadside, and long grass, and reeds, and trees attested the fertility of the soil. Dead bodies of oxen, which had been overcome by the heat, when being driven to or

from the cattle farms, were black with huge carrion crows. Flamingoes flapped their crimson wings



FOREST SCENE.

against the foliage, flocks of paroquets flitted like green clouds over head, and tall white birds waded in the swamps. Reptiles glided among the herb-

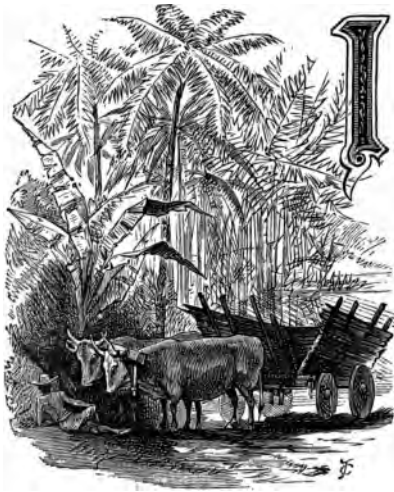
age, wild deer bounded over the savannahs, and monkeys sported in the woods. After a drive of six miles I arrived at Stanley village. I had not intended staying there, but I found the chapel full of people, and gave them a sermon, feeling that I was well repaid for the extra labour by tears that fell like rain-drops from the eyes of several in the congregation.

I went on to Mahaicony, held service there, and then had hospitable entertainment at the house of a cattle farmer. In the afternoon I drove through a dense wilderness of bush and trees to Catherines, a negro settlement, in which houses and chapel were alike of primitive construction, having walls of basket-work and roofs of thatch. The people had but recently been brought under religious influences, and were little better than barbarians in their mode of life, but were anxious for instruction, and thoroughly appreciated what they knew of Methodism. There was scarcely one belonging to the settlement—man, woman, or child—not at the service. I urged upon them the simple truths of repentance and faith, met the members of the society, and then returned to Mahaicony, where at night I preached to a crowded congregation. A prayer-meeting was held after the sermon; there was a throng of penitents at the communion rail, some of whom

were enabled to rejoice in the pardon of their sins. So much exertion and exposure to the sun caused me severe suffering in the night ; but I was thankful that another Sabbath had been filled with labour in the name of Christ, and that the labour had not been in vain.

CHAPTER IV.

The Interior of British Guiana.



IN "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," Guiana was looked upon as a land of glories and enchantments equalling those of Arabian story. Enclosed in a dark ring of forests, there was, according to a prevailing report, a wonderful city, called by some, Eldorado, or The Gilded, and by others, Manoa ; a city having walls and roofs of gold, "agate tessellating its pavement, precious stones encrusting its pinnacles." This alluring but deceptive vision

appears to have had its origin in a rock in the midst of a lake, the surface of which, glistening in the sunlight, shone like a cluster of jewelled towers. In those days of adventure and discovery men were in a state of feverish excitement, and that which, in a calmer state of mind, would have been rationally explained, was exaggerated into any form, and imbued with any colour that pleased the fancy.

Sir Walter Raleigh, whose enterprising spirit looked out into such wide fields of poetry and romance, was enticed by the fabled city far up the Orinoco, but instead of gilded palaces found only Indian huts. Still confident, however, that a more thorough search would bring to light the rich mystery on which his heart was set, he went out, after his long imprisonment in the Tower, and, having reached the mouth of the Orinoco, sent Captain Keymis, with a detachment of men, to explore the country, and take possession of Manoa. The expedition of course failed, and Raleigh's eldest son was slain in a fight with the Spaniards. Keymis, maddened by the reproaches of his master, committed suicide in the ship's cabin, and the "Shepherd of the Ocean," as Spenser designated him, came home to lay the head, which had been filled with so many magnificent visions, on the block on Tower-hill.

But though Guiana did not equal the dreams of romantic adventurers, it is, in point of scenery and exuberance of vegetable and animal life, worthy of comparison with almost any part of the world of the same extent. Its vast floods, its enormous trees, its gigantic grasses, its creeping and crawling monsters, suggest one of those geologic scenes so boldly and graphically depicted by Hugh Miller. To the European, Guiana seems impressed with "Footprints of the Creator" of more recent date than those on his native soil. The interior is singularly free from those monuments of ancient power and pomp, such as are to be found in Yucatan and Peru. There are no platforms of solid masonry; no masses of sculptured stone, reared up in old time, as temples of the gods or houses of kings. The only attempt to connect the past with the future is what Humboldt calls "a vast belt of carved rock," stretching through the province. On some of the rocks are rude representations of European ships, intimating work of a comparatively late period. On others, the figures are much above the height of a man, and the Indians say that they were carved by men standing in canoes when the water-line was considerably higher than at present. Thus, in the defiles of Sinai, and in the ancient water-tracks of Guiana, we see men endeavouring to escape

from oblivion by turning the everlasting stone into historic tablets. With the exception of the narrow band of cultivation on the coast, and for some distance up the rivers and creeks, Guiana is the domain of untamed, prolific nature. There are thousands of leagues in which no tree is touched by the axe, no rood of soil furrowed by the plough! In its general features the country may be described as consisting of a level plain, in some parts forty miles in breadth, and beyond an extensive range of sand-hills sloping up to chains of rocky mountains. The plain is diversified by forests and savannahs; some of the latter being known as wet savannahs, from the fact that in the rainy season they are covered with water from the swollen rivers. The sand-hills are either clothed with timber, or open out into beautiful glades and green undulations, which bring to the mind of the English traveller memories of forest and park scenes at home. These grassy declivities and leafy knolls, with their background of mountains, afford space and outline for a repetition of Shenstone's Leasowes on a grand scale, and with magnificent effect. The highest elevation in Guiana is a mount called Roraima, more than seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. Its sides are extremely precipitous, and in some parts there are perpendicular cliffs one

thousand, and one thousand five hundred feet in height.

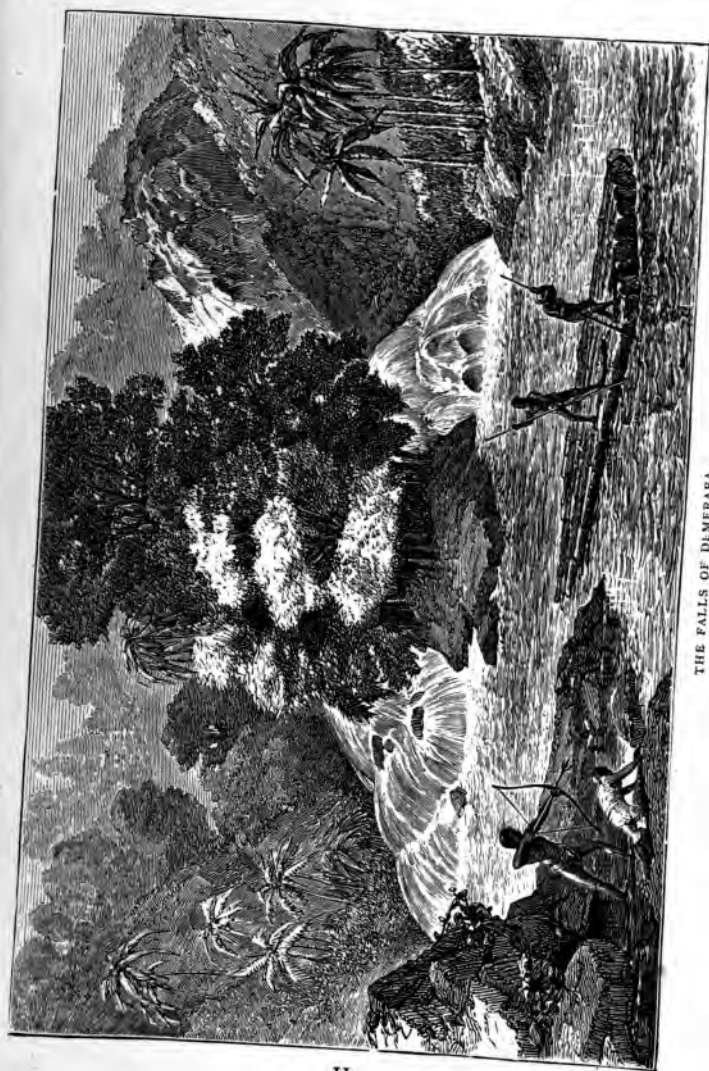
In the upper regions of the province, there are rocks of peculiar and fantastic form. One is called the Felled Tree, and when Schomburgk first saw it with its sides covered with lichens, he could scarcely rid himself of the idea that it was the remains of a tree that had been struck by lightning. Another consists of blocks of blue granite, and is one hundred and sixty feet in height ; it has the appearance of a huge earthenware vessel, and has been named by the Indians Comuti, or Water-jar. Another is named Ataraipu, or Devil's Rock. The latter, for about three hundred feet above the savannah, is thickly wooded, and from its belt of trees rises a bare, sharply-pointed peak, five hundred and fifty feet high. Its name scarcely comports with sacred associations, but, seen at a distance, it is not unlike an English spire seen above a group of embowering elms. There are other rocks which resemble rude sculpturings of men and animals, and have an appearance such as the gigantic statues and complex figures of Egypt and Assyria would have when the artist was intimating, by the earlier strokes of his mallet, the majesty he was about to bring out of the cold, hard stone.

Guiana is not like some parts of the world, where

hills riven into shapes of grandeur, and plains wide enough for the tents of armies or the flocks of a hundred sheiks, lack the animation which water gives to the landscape, for its rivers are proportioned to the large features of its cliffs, woods, and savannahs. The Essequibo has a sea-reach thirty-five miles in length, and seven or eight in breadth. In this lake-like expanse are several islands, which, with their fringe of tropical foliage, lend a pleasing variety to the scene. The Indians call the river "the younger brother of the Orinoco." It has a course of about six hundred and forty miles, and is fed by the drainage of an area of about forty thousand square miles. It is for the traveller a majestic pathway into the interior. As he glides upward in the Indian's canoe, every stroke of the paddles brings him into the presence of astonishing manifestations of the Creator's power and glory. At one point of its course it is narrowed by mountain walls to fifty feet, and rushes over two rocky ledges into an opening more befitting its volume of waters. Even its tributaries surpass our largest rivers. One of these, the Mazaruni, is four hundred miles ; another, the Cuyuni, three hundred and thirty miles in length. These streams, uniting a short distance from the Essequibo, flow into it through a break in its bank a mile in width.

The Demerara is not so large as the Essequibo, but is a noble river. Few, if any, white men have explored it to its source. Two travellers in the interior found it so narrow that they were able to leap across it; but, climbing a neighbouring bluff, they saw it winding for miles and miles in the distance, a thin, silvery thread, worked into the green texture of the landscape. They would have gladly followed a track so inviting, but had not brought a sufficient supply of provisions, and were unable to obtain cassava bread from the Indians. The navigation of the upper reaches of the river is impeded by rapids and falls. What are known as the Great Falls are formed by a rocky barrier stretching over the bed of the river. Masses of rock, canopied by beautiful trees and tapestried with ferns, divide the river into several channels, which, being roughened by immense boulders, cause the waters to rush with great fury into the lower basin. The white foam clinging to the rocks and the drooping boughs, the thick spray, lovely with the light of mimic rainbows, the fierce, impetuous torrents, form a scene of singular splendour. The Demerara receives a tributary called the Potaro, on which a cataract has recently been discovered which is said to rival Niagara.

The Berbice is eccentric in its course, in some



THE FALLS OF DMERARA.

places narrowing to thirty feet, and in other places widening into lagoons. It is difficult to get a boat out of some of the lagoons, as there are several false openings, ancient but now obstructed channels of the river, but so much like the real channel in appearance that several of them will sometimes be tried before the right one is found. It was on one of the upper lagoons of the Berbice that Schomburgk came unexpectedly on the magnificent leaves of what is now famous through the world as the *Victoria Regia*,—a discovery which he might well regard as a rich recompense for many disappointments, perils, and sufferings in his travels through Guiana. Some parts of the river abound in huge alligators or caymans. Their favourite place of resort is the foot of cataracts and rapids, where they lie in wait for prey brought down by the rapidity of the current. But it is not from these monsters alone that danger in the waters is to be feared. The traveller disposed to bathe in some quiet nook where the water is deep and clear, notices a flash and commotion, and finds that the lively appearance is caused by the movements of small but blood-thirsty fishes called *pirai*, which voraciously attack whatever comes within their reach. Banded together, they will overcome and devour fishes ten times their own weight; and even the alligator

when it has been wounded is not able to defend itself from their knife-like jaws.

On the banks of these rivers, in the valleys, and up the sides of the hills, are countless trees, compared with which the finest oaks and elms in our English woodlands are but dwarfs. Conspicuous among these are the green-heart, the purple-heart, the mora, and the wallaba. In some places the wild vine extends from tree to tree, making a shade as of a rich green ceiling over the creeks and forest paths. Not unfrequently a fig tree, the seed of which has been deposited by birds, may be seen growing from the upper branches of the mora, the fig itself laden with gorgeous parasites; and the whole forming a grand, pagoda-like pile of foliage. But after a time the mora is exhausted of its sap by the roots of the fig, and the consequence is that both mora and fig, with all their orchids and creepers, fade and die, and the decayed mass has an almost ghastly aspect in the midst of trees still flourishing in the pride and glory of tropic life. Much of the wood is well-nigh granitic in its hardness, is beautifully marked, and takes a most exquisite polish. There are several wood-cutting establishments up the Demerara river. The timber is bound together in rafts and floated down to George Town, where it is used in the framework of buildings, and

for other purposes, or shipped for England. The forests and savannahs teem with animal life. Of quadrupeds are to be found, the tapir; several kinds of deer, some of which have a most delicate and graceful formation; hordes of the peccairi or wild hog; the agouti, similar to the guinea-pig; the sloth, a pitiful object when on the ground, but alert enough in its natural position, clinging with powerful claws to the branches; the cougar, or deer-tiger; the jaguar, with sleek, glossy skin, seldom seen in the daytime, but prowling about the dwellings of man at night. Indians and travellers often hear its fierce yell, and see by its footprints in the morning how near it was to them when they were asleep. It will not often attack man, but it has been known to do so. One of the Caribi Indians went one day into the forest to look for a certain kind of bark in which they roll their tobacco when making cigars. Not returning at the right time, his friends went in search of him. They soon discovered his track, and also the footmarks of a large jaguar. Going on, they found his bow broken on the ground, and were in little doubt as to what had been his fate. At length they arrived at the scene of death. There was a knife hastily lashed to a stick, forming a kind of temporary lance; but the knife had not kept in its place, and had turned from the skin

of the animal without piercing it. Weapons failing, the Indian had attempted to climb a tree, but, from scratches on the bark, it was evident that when he had got to a height of ten feet the jaguar sprung after him, tore him down, and then devoured him.

On the Pomeroon, a river to the west of the Essequibo, a sad accident befell an Indian family. Three children had gone to the river-side, two of whom went into the water to bathe, leaving the youngest, a fine little boy, on the bank. While they were splashing and shouting, they saw that a cougar, having come stealthily through the bush, had laid its paw on the child's shoulder. While screaming for help, the elder children bravely attempted to drive away the beast, but it seized the child's head in its jaws. It was driven away by the noise of the children, and the women who had heard the alarm; and the mother was just in time to see her child draw its last breath. The mangled body was carried to the house, but at night the animal came raging and yelling for his prey. It was the more difficult to keep him off, as Indian houses consist of little more than a roof supported on poles, both sides and ends being open. None of the men were present, and the women had to do their best to frighten him until morning, by shouting and waving firebrands.

Monkeys abound in the woods, and cause amusement to those who are passing, by their wild gambols. The sakuwinkies, small and lively, will keep company with a canoe for a great distance, springing from branch to branch, and whistling and chattering to the paddlers. When tamed they are very affectionate, are pleased to be caressed, and some of the Indians carry them almost constantly on their heads.

The greatest danger to life in the forests is caused by the serpents and snakes. The camudi, or water python—known to be as much as thirty and forty feet in length—lurks by the river banks. One was killed which had swallowed a Caribi boy; and deer, and even the smaller kinds of alligator, are occasionally found in them. The rattle-snake is often met with on the dry savannahs. The konokosi, or bush-master, glistens with the colours of the rainbow, but is, as its name signifies, the terror of man and beast. The labairi is speckled with a dirty brown, and is not easy to distinguish from the ground or the stump of the tree on which it is coiled. Its bite causes terrible torments, which, with very few exceptions, are sure precursors of death. A Christian Indian was hunting in the woods and inadvertently put his foot near one, which struck him with its fang. His foot and leg swelled to an enormous size, and

a dark cloud, he said, seemed to gather round him. After a time he was able to crawl to his dwelling ; he appeared to recover, but the poison had tainted his blood, and in eight months from the time of receiving the bite he died. His only brother, when out in the woods with another Indian, was also bitten by a labairi. They had a hammock with them, in which he was placed, and had to be left in his agony through the night, while his companion went for help. In the morning he was carried to his home in the hammock slung on a pole. The missionary on the spot administered to him a strong decoction of sarsaparilla, suppuration ensued, and he recovered.

In his *Wanderings in South America* Waterton gives a brilliant but not exaggerated account of the birds of Guiana. It is indeed scarcely possible to find words too glowing in which to describe forms so exquisite and plumage so gorgeous. From the humming-bird fluttering over the flowers and arrayed in colours rich as the old Sidonian needle-work, to the macaw, flaming in feathers of scarlet, yellow, blue, and green, birds in endless variety and more than imaginable splendour are to be found. The cock of the rock frequents retired places, such as caves and shady rocks. The wing and tail plumes are brown and white, and the other parts of its body are of a deep

orange tint, and its head is crowned with a fine double crest. The campanero, or bell-bird, is white as snow, and has a note resembling the toll of a bell, which, it is said, can be heard three miles away. The toucan has a bill almost as large as its body. The cassique, commonly called the mocking-bird, imitates every sound it hears, and is further remarkable from the fact that it weaves a pendulous nest. The jacmar is clothed in changing blue and golden green. The pompadour cotinga is purple, as if it had been held by the wings and dipped in one of the dyeing vats of Tyre, the wings only being spotlessly white. Parrots are numerous, and paroquets pass overhead in screaming flocks. The birds thus mentioned are simply indicative of the ornithological riches of Guiana. Such is the glory of flashing, sparkling wings that it must be seen to be understood. Nor can it be seen, excepting by those whose hearts are bound and clasped by "cold, material laws," without adoring thoughts of the creative skill, the boundless resources through which the woods, rarely disturbed by the step of man, have been peopled and irradiated by those forms of light and beauty. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches."

Guiana is not like Hindostan or China, the

home of millions of men, but is thinly strewn with wasted and wasting wrecks of once powerful families and confederacies. Located in the different provinces of what Sir W. Raleigh in his enthusiastic way calls "the large, rich, and powerful empire of Guiana," are the remains of more than fifty Indian tribes. Disease, induced by their barbarous mode of life; wars, in which the vanquished were exterminated or bound to the exhausting labours of a cruel slavery, have reduced their numbers; and nations which were fierce and strong when the European first looked into their wild haunts, are now represented by a few individuals. In one case a single hut has been sufficient to cover all that were left of the whole tribe. The Amaripas had so melted away that in 1843 there was none remaining but one old woman. Humboldt found in a cave, on the cataracts of the Orinoco, six hundred well-preserved skeletons, each one in a basket formed of the stalks of palm leaves. They were the skeletons of the Atures, who had entirely perished. Their language had become obsolete, and was only spoken by an old parrot, which had belonged to and survived those ill-fated families. There is something sad in the thought of that lonely bird uttering words which could never again come from human lips.

"Still he calls, with voice imploring,
To a world that heeds him not ;
Nought replies but waters roaring,
No kind soul bewails his lot.

"Swift the savage turns his rudder,
When his eyes the bird behold ;
None e'er saw, without a shudder,
That Aturian parrot old."

The Indians of Guiana are nowhere found in large communities, but in small hamlets, and these generally at a great distance from one another. On the delta of the Orinoco there is a tribe whose dwellings are simply mats hung high up among the stems of the palm trees, so as to be out of the reach of the tremendous inundations which take place during the rainy season. Their fires are lighted on a layer of moist earth and clay, and at night have the appearance of lamps suspended under the foliage. The fruit, pith, and juice of the palm supply them with nutriment, and swamp and flood are a surer defence from their enemies than "thick wall or moated gate." But the Indians of British Guiana are a step nearer civilisation, for they live in houses, rudely constructed, yet more like human habitations than a mat swinging in the forest.

An Indian builds his house without cost, and with but little trouble. A few poles, and a quantity of leaves for thatch, are all the materials he

needs. The house is an unwallled, unpartitioned space covered by a roof, and there is a small out-building or kitchen, where the women prepare the food and live with the children, the house being appropriated by the man as lord of the establishment. The furniture is as unpretending as the architecture, and consists of a hammock and a few seats hewn out of blocks of wood and bearing a rude resemblance to the quadrupeds of the land. The hammock is swung from the timbers of the roof, and, like Goldsmith's chest of drawers, "contrives a double debt to pay," and is in the daytime a luxurious sofa, and at night a very comfortable bed. Fires are lighted under the hammocks at night, to keep away wild beasts and to preserve the sleeper from the effects of the damp air. In the house there is usually a number of Indian baskets, called pegalls. They are made of split canes, some wands of which are coloured red or black and then woven into ornamental patterns, similar to those which may be seen on the walls of South American temples and on the tombs and pottery of Egypt.

The Indians have, as a rule, an abundant supply of wholesome food, such as fish, game, and cassava bread. The cassava root is first grated into a pulpy mass, then the juice, which is a deadly poison, is extracted from it, but when boiled loses

its deleterious properties, and is used for several culinary purposes, not only in the forest but also in the houses of the colonists. The bread, which has no particular taste, is in the form of thin cakes, and more brittle than biscuit. Near to the house a portion of wood or savannah is cleared as a provision ground, in which the women cultivate cassava, yams, the red pepper, the pine-apple, and other tropical fruits. The men are very skilful in hunting, both with the blowpipe and the bow and arrow. The blowpipe is part of the stem of a gigantic grass which grows to a height of from thirty to forty feet, and has joints eighteen feet from knot to knot. Their darts and arrows are tipped with the wourila poison, which causes speedy death even when the weapon that bears it but slightly grazes the skin. The ingredients of this poison, so far as known to Europeans, are a wild vine called the wourila, a bulbous root, two species of stinging ants, and the pounded fangs of the labairi and the konokosi—a mixture as deadly and repulsive as that in the cauldron of Macbeth's witches. No antidote to this poison has yet been discovered. Once two Arowacks went into the forest, when one of them shot at a monkey in a tree. The arrow missed the monkey, and in its descent struck the Indian on the arm. He knew at once that he was doomed to death.

"I shall never," he said, "bend this bow again," and then putting his bow and arrows on the ground, he stretched himself beside them, bade his companion farewell, and soon died.

The Indians, living generally on the banks of creeks or rivers, find a canoe indispensable. Most of the canoes are made of the trunk of a tree, which is hewn to the right shape, and then hollowed by fire, and smoothed and carved with hatchets and knives. Some use what are called wood-skin canoes, which are formed of the unbroken bark of a large tree. These being light, are of great service where the stream is roughened into cataracts, as they can be easily carried along the bank until the smooth water is again reached. A large canoe on the river is a picturesque object. Its dark-haired, red-skinned occupants will often have with them macaws, parrots, monkeys, calabashes, pegalls, and other tokens of wild forest life, novel and not unpleasing to European eyes. The canoes are propelled by paddles; and the Indians are skilful boatmen—steering down the foaming waters and among the rocks of the falls and rapids with astonishing coolness and precision. The senses of those children of the forest and river are thoroughly educated. Torpid and heavy as they seem in the streets of the colonial towns, they show to great advantage on their own ground. Just as a scholar sees a history

or an epic in a single word or phrase, they see a clue to the game of which they are in search, or to the travellers they are following, in a bent twig, a crushed flower, or a few confused marks on a forest track. Entering a deserted settlement, they look at the embers in the fire-place, and the dust on the rude furniture, or the earthenware which has been left, and on the faint footprints on the sand, and can tell at once how long the families have been absent, and what direction they have taken. A slight movement among the grass or leaves which a stranger would not notice shows them the kind of snake they have to avoid, or the kind of game they may hope to shoot. Being observant, they are capital naturalists, and know much more of the habits of birds, beasts, and reptiles, and the properties of plants, than the most diligent student of books. More than one hundred and forty medicinal barks, roots, and herbs, collected by them, were forwarded to the London International Exhibition of 1862.

They are not idolaters. Like the Red Men of the north, they believe in a Good Spirit; but this belief has little influence on their minds. They have no hope in God, but live in constant fear of evil spirits—a fear that is fostered by their sorcerers or medicine men. These impostors make a pretence of curing diseases by sucking the part affected.

After a great deal of ceremony, they will take from their mouths a fish-bone, a bird's claw, or a snake's tooth, which they assure their patient had been inserted in his body by one of the malicious powers: a custom also practised by the Obeah men among the negroes. The Indians are in great dread of the Orehn, or Water-mamma, supposed to be in the form of a mermaid, but able to appear in any shape that suits her fancy. They say that sometimes she will drag the canoe and its crew to the bottom of the river. Her imagined haunts are passed by them with terror; and if it is night, they keep close to the opposite bank of the river, and close their lips, and glide with noiseless paddles, until they think themselves beyond her reach. They have traditions of the Creation and of the Flood—traditions imbued with the colours of a wild poetry, such as plays through the Song of Hiawatha. They say that the Great Spirit, having created the heavens and the earth, sat on a huge cotton tree by the river-side, and cut off pieces of its bark which he cast all around. Those which touched the water became fishes; others flew in the air as birds; while some strewn on the earth took the form of animals; and from one, man rose up as the lord of earth. The following is their tradition of the Flood:—At one time all the animals were gifted with speech; and

Sign, the son of the Great Spirit, was appointed to rule over them. An immense tree had been created, every branch of which bore different kinds of fruit, and from its roots sprung every variety of vegetable. The animals rejoiced when they found this tree; but Sign, mindful of the future, determined to cut it down, and have its slips and seeds planted in every part of the world. The beasts were employed in this task; but Iwarriki, the monkey, was indolent and troublesome; and to keep him out of mischief, Sign sent him to a stream for water, giving him only an open-work basket in which to carry it. When the wonderful tree was cut down, it was found to be hollow, and full of water containing innumerable young fishes, with which Sign stocked the lakes and rivers. The water began to overflow; and fearing that the whole world would be flooded, he placed a closely-woven basket on the top of the stump, which, through some magical power, restrained the water. Iwarriki, seeing the cover, and thinking it hid choice fruits, removed it, when a mighty torrent burst forth, which spread over the earth. Sign, ever mindful of his charge, led the animals which could not swim or climb to a cave, the entrance to which he carefully sealed with wax, having previously given them a thorn with which to pierce the wax, so that

they might ascertain when the waters had fallen. Sign climbed a cocorite palm, and kept dropping the seeds of the cocorite on the water, that he might judge by the sound as to its height. At last the seeds struck the soft earth; the birds began their joyful notes; the flowers again smiled in the openings of the forest; and the animals were released from their imprisonment. Sign is represented as having two wicked brothers, whose enmity to him was unappeasable. They beat him to death, but the breath came back to his bruised body, and he again went on with his benevolent work. They threw him on a pile of blazing timbers to consume him, but he rose in beauty from the embers. They buried him alive, but earth could not bind him down, and he emerged from the grave. At length, wearied by repeated assaults, he climbed a mountain whose peaks faded in the azure of the sky, and rose from crag to crag until he was no longer visible.

Another Indian legend tells how a woman brought forth a monster, having a child's face but a serpent's body. She was at first terrified, but determined to cherish her offspring in secret. Her brothers found it, and, shooting at it with their arrows, concluded that they had killed it; but under the mother's care it revived, and grew to a formidable size. They again found it, and

cut it to pieces with their hatchets. She, it is said, gathered the remains together, and covered them with leaves. After a time there was a sign of motion under the leafy covering, the heap began to heave and swell, and from it there started a warrior of majestic aspect. His eyes were filled with heroic fire, his brow was terrible with war-paint, he bore the choicest weapons of the Indian chief, and hands and feet seemed impatient for the fray. Such, according to the legend, was the origin of the powerful and warlike tribe of the Caribs; and such, in truth, will be the effect of the leaves which are for the healing of the nations on half-embruted, maimed, festering humanity, whether in the woods of Guiana or in the cities and villages of England. Let those leaves be strewn on the mass of moral corruption, and man will rise up beautiful and luminous, as when moulded by his Creator's hand and inspired by his Creator's breath.

If the wild freedom and abundance of nature could make men happy without the aid of religion, few would have been happier than the aboriginal tribes of Guiana. With mighty forests and savannahs for their hunting-grounds, and wide lakes and magnificent rivers for their fisheries, and a rude plenty in their dwellings; and being neither oppressed by despotic law, or corrupted by a false

civilisation, their lives, according to the theory of those who assert the natural innocence and perfectibility of man, should have been pleasant as an idyllic story, joyful as an Arcadian festival. But it is far from being thus with them. The dark shadow of sin is on their lives, and the worst passions often smoulder under their meek aspect. Paul's description of the men who polluted the vast circumference of the Roman empire with their crimes, is true of them. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

Though the Indians of Guiana have no written history, there are memorials of their cruelty not to be thought of without a shudder. There are few in this country who have any idea of cannibalism but as a custom which at one time prevailed in the islands of the Southern Ocean. But the man-eater has been found in the west as well as in the south; and human flesh was eaten by the Indians even to so recent a date as Humboldt's researches on the Orinoco and its branches. *That distinguished traveller met with men who*

appeared mild and affectionate, and professing the Christian faith as represented by the Roman Catholic Missions, who had nevertheless a ravenous craving for the flesh of their fellow-men. The Indians under the British Government are more humanised, and are held in restraint by a stronger law than the Indians of the Orinoco, and it is not known that they resort to cannibalism, but there are relics of the practice in the province.

On the Moruca, one of the lesser rivers of Essequibo, there is a sand-reef called Waramuri, this being the name of a black ant which once abounded in the neighbourhood. Being somewhat elevated, it was chosen as the site of Mission premises in connection with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. On one part of the reef there is a mound, or tumulus, which was found to consist principally of small shells. This mound became an object of curiosity to the missionary and his white visitors, and they came to the conclusion that it was the refuse heap of an Indian tribe that had been accustomed to feed there. At length it was opened, and, mingled with layers of shells, were found bones of fishes and of land animals, and rude slabs of clay which had been used as dishes or baking pans. Going deeper, the excavators came upon human bones, most of them belonging to adults, but some of them those

of a little child, the skull of which had been broken in. Almost all the bones had been violently smashed, and the suspicion of the missionary was confirmed by the statement of an ancient Indian: "That is the way in which the nations who used to eat men always broke open the bones to get out the marrow. So our fathers have told us." The interest excited by this discovery induced the governor of the colony to organise an exploring party, and several other mounds were found in the woods and on the margin of the creeks, having in them stone axes or tomahawks, and bearing like testimony to the cannibalism which polluted the land in the old time. It is, however, a pleasing circumstance that Mission premises had been built near two of these mounds; and where once the lips of savages were clotted with human blood, the voice of melodious worship was heard, and prayers were addressed to Him who is "the Author of peace, and Lover of concord."

Among the Indians not yet Christianised there is a bloody and unrelenting system of revenge. If on the death of a man it is supposed that his end has been brought about by an evil spirit, a sorcerer pretends to point out the individual or the family at whose instigation the mischief has been done. A near relative of the deceased

is charged with the task of vengeance. He is called a *kanaima*, being possessed by the destroying spirit bearing that name. He has to separate himself from his fellow-men, and to submit to many privations, until he has accomplished the terrible work to which he has been designated. If the real offender cannot be found, some member of his family—man, woman, or child—must be slain. The victim is suddenly struck down, and the fangs of a poisonous serpent are run through his tongue, or a virulent powder which the *kanaima* carries with him, is thrust into his mouth, causing frightful agonies which end in death. The vengeance even goes beyond death, and if the victim is buried by his friends, the *kanaima* will seek out the grave and press a sharpened stick through the body, that he may taste its blood. To ensure the destruction of the *kanaima*, the body of the deceased is opened and a red-hot axe is put in it, the Indians imagining that the heat of the iron passes into the *kanaima* and slowly consumes him. They also fancy that the spirit of the *kanaima* will sometimes enter the wild beasts of the forest, and a jaguar of unusual fierceness is called *kanaima*. Such an animal will appal the bravest hunter. "This," he will say, "if it be but an ordinary wild animal, I may kill with a bullet or arrow; but what will be

my fate if I assail the man-destroyer, the terrible kanaima?"

Some of the Indians are polygamists, and measure their greatness by the number of their wives. A Warau was seen by a missionary in 1840 who had nine wives. He was jealous, and shot one and severely wounded the arm of another with a cutlass. He was not likely to win their affection by such methods, and when he was enfeebled by sickness they unceremoniously took leave of him, glad of an opportunity of escaping from his tyranny. A man who has already a wife and children, will be seen bringing up a little girl, whom, when grown, he intends to take as a wife. The position of the women is low, and they are sternly and often cruelly treated. They are not the companions but the slaves of their husbands, and their lives are a dull round of unwomanly labour: for they have to cultivate the provision grounds, to carry heavy burdens, and to paddle the canoe when the family is moving from one place to another.

Thus it will be seen that man, even in conditions most favourable to freedom and plenty, is vicious and miserable when without the restraints and the hopes of the Gospel. Some efforts have been made to bring those wanderers into the fold of Christ. The London Missionary Society has

a station up the Berbice ; but the highest praise is due to clergymen of the Church of England, who have gone, with a noble heroism, into danger and privation, to preach the truth to the Indian tribes in their native wilds. One of these began his labours up the Pomeroon, occupying an old hut half demolished by wood ants, and the haunt of frogs, huge spiders, cockroaches, scorpions, centipedes, and lizards, one of which, called the wood-slave, walks on the ceiling with back downward, like a fly. For some time the Indians shunned him ; but at length one who had seen the effect of missionary labour in another part of the colony came to him, bringing a child, which he left in his care, and promised that he would come himself every week for instruction ; for he said he knew without revelation from heaven it was impossible for any one to find the way to the "Great our Father." Other children and adults followed, schools were organised, and Church ordinances instituted. As the work went on, stations were established in different districts of the province, which, with their neat roofs and windows and luxuriant gardens, seemed like a gleam of millennial beauty on the rough features of the wilderness. Many Indians were drawn to these stations, and were baptised in the Christian faith ; nor was there wanting evidence in their lives of a new and

beneficent power stirring in their hearts. When there was famine in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland, the distress of the people was brought before the Indians of the Pomeroon Mission. They offered to give their cassava and other provisions for the relief of the sufferers. Being told that these gifts would spoil on the voyage, they expressed their sorrow that they could give nothing else, as they had but little money. One of them, however, had recently earned ten dollars, with which he was about to go to George Town, in order to buy clothes for himself and family. Taking one dollar, he said, "I give this for myself;" and holding up another, "I give this for my wife and eldest daughter." He also offered to lend to those who had no money. His example stimulated the others; even poor widows looked up a small coin, and fifty-two dollars were sent from that station. Many pleasing changes were noticed in those who came under the influence of Christian teaching; and instead of glaring and grotesque paint, there was decent clothing; instead of heathen traditions and old war-stories, the beautiful narratives of Holy Writ; and instead of the fierce spirit of *kanaima*, the gentleness of brotherly love.

The Wesleyans have no Mission to the Indians. The exhausting labours in connection with the

churches on the coast have prevented Evangelical excursions into the interior. It would, however, be a noble work for two or three young men of robust health, enterprising spirit, and willingness to do, and dare, and suffer for Christ's sake, to bid farewell for a time to civilisation, and, going up the great rivers of the province, to begin their mission by preaching to the negroes in the distant wood-cutting establishments, and gathering them into societies as the base of operations among the Indians, and taking a wider and yet wider sweep until even Venezuela, and Brazil, and Surinam could hear the truth from their lips. In his youth Mr. Wesley was ambitious to preach the Gospel to the red man, and it would be no unworthy thing to emulate him in this ambition, or to strive for a place of honour with those apostles to the Indian tribes, Brainerd and Eliot.





VIEW IN BRITISH GUIANA.

CHAPTER V.

The People and Mission Work.



AD the West Indies been the only colonies of Britain, their resources would have been more fully developed, and their commercial importance much greater than under present circumstances it is likely to be.

Canada, Australia, and South Africa present fields of enterprise to which attention is rather directed than to the rich lands in the Caribbean Sea and on the coast of South America. But if the former

had not invited emigration, there can be little doubt that thousands who have felt that Britain did not afford scope for their energies, would have sought a home on the latter. Had they done so the West Indies would long ere this have been cultured from beach to mountain peak, and causes of fever would have been so removed that there would have been a possibility of health equal to that in an English county. It is not the atmosphere, but the miasma of the tropics that is so deleterious to Europeans. There is great heat, but it is tempered by sea-breezes, and white emigrants would have swept away the noxious vapours that rise from the land. Forests would have been cut down, swamps would have been drained, rivers would have been embanked, and where now there is the rank smell of decaying vegetation, there would have been the balmy odour of aromatic plants. British hands, had they been there in sufficient number, would have imparted a new aspect to the colonies, smoothing down the shagginess of the islands, and giving broad continuous beauty to the level leagues of Guiana. As it is, white men only go to the West Indies to fill Government offices, to direct the labour of the negroes, and for mercantile and professional purposes. But whether they go in official capacity, or as planters, merchants, doctors, or lawyers, they

do not think of staying beyond their term of service, or longer than is needful to gain a competency. There are some old English families in Barbadoes, who for hundreds of years have been connected with the soil, but a resident aristocracy is unknown in the other colonies, and the white men who are there have but a temporary interest in the land and the people. In past times the influence of the planters on the negroes was anything but beneficial, for their immoralities were coarse and undisguised. Most of those who had charge of plantations on the islands, lived amid imposing grandeurs and delicate graces of natural scenery ; but their conduct may be taken as proof that there is no efficacy in material magnificence to restrain men from evil. The mountains towering about them displayed the noble sculpturing of the Almighty Hand ; the valleys, green from side to side with the rich foliage of the torrid zone, the vast stretches of sea melting into the dim purple of the far horizon, spread before them like a panoramic canvas on which genius has unfolded its dream of beauty ; birds that seemed to have steeped their wings in the gorgeous lights of a West Indian sunset fluttered beside their windows ; and they could scarcely turn out of the beaten track without trampling on leaves that would be a splendour in an English conservatory ; and yet

they lived in an unpausing round of vulgar sensualism. It is true that in the worst times there were a few who "wore the white flower of a blameless life," and maintained the dignity of the Christian gentleman; but the great majority of the planters abandoned themselves, without the slightest sense of shame, to gluttony, to intemperance, and other abominations. Of late years there has been a considerable improvement; unhallowed associations have given place to the sanctities of wedded life, and convivial revels to domestic order; still there are many whose example is far from being elevating to the minds and hearts of the people. In our estimate of the black man it is only fair to take into consideration the injury inflicted on him by the bad practices of the white men. It was only natural for the negroes to become lax in their morals, when men to whom they looked up, as coming from lands on which the light of truth had been so long shining, were so immoral. When we think of what Englishmen and Scotchmen were in the West Indies, our wonder is not so much excited by the imperfections as by the virtues of the negro character.

Much as missionaries have accomplished, they would have accomplished still more if the influence of the planters, instead of being against

them, had been in their favour. This is not intended to convey the idea that after the emancipation they put themselves in direct opposition to Mission work. They had the sagacity to see that when the lash could no longer be used, religious teaching must be resorted to as the best method of inducing honesty and industry in the people, and they gladly afforded facilities for such teaching. But while as a matter of pecuniary interest they were willing for the negroes on the estates to be religious, their own lives were a violation of every Christian precept, and had a damaging effect on those to whom they ought to have been patterns of all that is lovely and of good report.

There is a class between the Europeans and the blacks — the coloured people — mulattos, quadroons, octoroons, and mestizos. They have usually a graceful physique, comely features, dark flashing eyes, and black wavy hair. Their intellects are bright and active, and they are gifted with a natural eloquence, enabling them to speak with fluency, in circumstances in which an Englishman would hesitate and stammer, and to express themselves without premeditation in oratorical periods. They fill many offices which it was once thought could only be filled by white men, and it is a common thing to find them in the legis-

lature, at the bar, and in the pulpit. When influenced by religious principle, they do good service in missionary work. Two of their number will long be remembered for their devotion to the cause of Christ, J. J. Savory, who recently died in George Town, Demerara, and was for many years Wesleyan day-school teacher, local preacher, and class leader; and Henry Wharton, who with Africa in his heart left the healthful slopes and enchanting vales of his native Grenada, toiled to bless the tribes of Guinea, until his strength was exhausted, dying the death of a veteran missionary in Madeira, October 11, 1873.

There is some difficulty in giving a correct representation of the blacks in the West Indies. They are so diverse in character, that both eulogistic and unfavourable reports can be sustained by undeniable facts. According to the standpoint from which they are viewed, or the section of them which comes under observation, they may be described as intelligent, industrious, honest, godly; or stupid, lazy, thievish, immoral. The best way to arrive at right conclusions is to classify them and to award to each class the due measure of praise or blame.

There are black men in the West Indies; only distinguishable from Europeans by their complexion and the mould of their features. In the

ordinary operations of the intellect they are quite equal to white men. There are few of the natives of Britain who could surpass them in the acquisition of a language, or the mastery of a mathematical problem. What they learn, they learn quickly, and hold tenaciously. But their minds are receptive rather than creative, and it is a rare thing for them to strike out any original line of thought. They have an ear for what is rhythmical in language, and are skilful in weaving Johnsonian sentences, but they have not the poetic faculty which would enable them to appropriate as a grace for their composition, the large resplendent imagery of the seas, the cliffs, the valleys, and woods amid which they dwell. They are fond of colour, yet they do not feel the stirrings of artistic genius that would prompt them to copy the variegated charms of land, and water, and sky which they have continually before their eyes. But on a certain level they do well, and show to advantage as merchants, members of houses of assembly, editors of newspapers, schoolmasters, and ministers of religion.

There is another class of black people at the antipodes of that higher class, being depraved in mind and manner. Work is an abomination to them ; they do as little of it as possible, and may as often be seen lounging indolently by the wayside, as busy with the hoe in the field, or at any

useful handicraft. They are as ignorant as if they had just come from the wilds of Africa, yet they have the low cunning by which they can make it seem as if they were conferring a favour when they are gaining an advantage. Though they are superstitious in reference to Obeahism and ghostly apparitions, they boast of their freedom from the restraints of religion, unless it suits their purpose to assume the Christian character, which they can do with considerable effect, having any number of pious phrases at command. In the brawls in which they frequently engage their faces are distorted by rage, and their blasphemies and threats are horrible. A stranger would think they were about to tear each other in pieces, but from sheer cowardice they usually confine themselves to foul words. At night they go about stealing whatever they can lay their hands on ; or meet for trashy songs and obscene dances. It is unfortunate that negroes of this type have often been taken as specimens of the whole. Travellers who have dashed through the West Indies, not staying to acquaint themselves with the better side of West Indian life, but seeing only the rude, the vicious, the indolent, who loitered about the wharves and the market-places, have hastily concluded that all in the colonies were of like character, and painted a portrait repulsive in every line, and have held

it before the English public with the taunt that such are the so-called men and brethren for whom the great price of the emancipation was paid, and for whom so much has been attempted by missionary labour. There is as much injustice in such representations as there would be in sketching the roughs at a dog-fight or a group of bloated revellers at a tavern table as typical Englishmen.

Between the highest and the lowest of the black people, and constituting the great majority of the population, there are those who may be described as plain, decent, industrious, and more or less actuated by religious sentiments. They are not without follies and weaknesses, which are apparent in their weddings, in which they attempt an imitation of the splendour of great folks, and play at lady and gentleman in very absurd fashion. For months they save all they can of their earnings in preparation for the event, which is distinguished, by white waistcoats, white dresses, flowing veils, and a profusion of orange blossoms. If the parties live where vehicles can be used, there is the additional gaiety of carriages and pairs of greys. The marriage feast is on a large scale ; the tables are burdened with the best viands the colony can afford, the numerous guests are duly observant of a prescribed etiquette, and negro eloquence flows plentifully in congratulatory speeches. Funerals

also are made as imposing as possible, and very often a black peasant has a burial equal to that of an English squire. But with the exception of these occasional aberrations, the conduct of the people is regulated by good sense. Shrewdness is combined with their simplicity; they are keen in getting, yet generous in giving, and though ready to flash out in anger at small provocations, are soon appeased. They have, on the whole, made good use of their freedom, but they have not had time to get rid of all the evils engendered by years of bondage. It is not long since they were in a worse plight than the savage who hunts till he is weary, and eats till he is gorged, and sleeps till he can sleep no longer. Barbarism in its untamed exuberance of life is not so bad as barbarism bound in servitude to a corrupt civilisation. Slavery is not only an evil, as robbing a man of civil rights and subjecting him to the cruelty and caprice of his owner; it crushes down the mind until it becomes but a brute instinct, and works the sensibilities of the heart into mere animal tendencies. The wounds inflicted by the slave-driver on the bodies of his victims heal in a few months, but successive generations must pass away before the intellectual and moral damage can be fully rectified. We see proof of this in the history of the children of Israel. They had

been set free by wonderful demonstrations of Jehovah's power ; yet, with the wail of stricken Egypt, and the dash of the Red Sea's wave, and the victorious melody of song and timbrel still in their ears, they were ready to go back to Egypt and to resume their toil in the brick-fields for the sake of the cucumbers and melons, the onions and flesh-pots to which they had been accustomed. Men whose nature has been debased by slavery cannot all at once rise to the level of those who have never felt the chain, and to whom paths of improvement have been open for centuries. There is, therefore, no cause for wonder if the negroes in the West Indies still show to some extent the injurious effects of the bondage in which they were so long held ; but they have been moving onward, and their present condition is a very different one to that which they were in forty years ago. Sir Samuel W. Baker says of the negro : " In no instance has he evinced other than a retrogression when once freed from restraint." This is certainly not true of the negroes now under consideration, for, instead of retrogression, there has been marked advance. In slavery they were half naked ; now they are, as a rule, decently clothed, as Europeans. In slavery they were driven to their work ; now they may be seen going to it with willing steps and beaming faces. In slavery they were kennelled

like dogs ; now they live in comfortable cottages. In slavery they were besotted by superstition ; now they rejoice in the light of the Gospel. In slavery they died like brutes ; now many of them die with the testimony of a Saviour's presence on their lips. It is, surely, unfair to say that there has been nothing but retrogression, when a large proportion of them are proprietors of substantial houses and small freeholds, and when men who were once slaves are now to be found managing whole estates. If we measure them by our English civilisation, which has been maturing through a thousand years, we may think them backward ; but if we put a West Indian village by the side of even the capital of an African kingdom, we are better able to appreciate their progress. We see more refinement in the house of a peasant than in the palace of the king. We find the labourers in the village more enlightened than the nobles in the city. We find the children of the former as much beyond the children of the latter in education as the graduate of a university is beyond a charity school boy. The contrast is startling, and we acknowledge the vast difference between the influence of Christianity and the influence of idolatry on the human mind.

It is Christianity that has made the people in the West Indies what they are. When missionaries

first went to them they were as low in intellect and morality as it was possible for human beings to be. But under the ignorance, and superstition, and vice, the servants of God knew that there was a living soul. They were satisfied that the negro in his utmost debasement belonged as truly to the great brotherhood of man as the Hebrew impassioned by the Spirit of God, or the Greek with intellect clear as his own skies ; and they took hold of the uncouth barbarism before them, and in the name of their Master sounded those notes to which the human soul, however overlaid by corruption, seldom fails to respond. Their labours were not in vain, for soon they rejoiced in seeing thousands "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled" by the power of Divine grace. John Stirling, speaking of the negroes as he found them in St. Vincent's, says : "They are, as a body, decidedly unfit for freedom ; and if left, as at present, completely in the hands of their masters, will never become so, unless through the agency of the Methodists." It is certain that Methodist missionaries did much, not only in preparing them for emancipation, but also in hastening on their day of jubilee. There would have been hesitation in giving freedom to wretched creatures from whose nature the lineaments of humanity had well-nigh been removed. The gift would have been more a curse than a

blessing to them while in that degraded condition, for, with few wants to spur them to exertion, and destitute of moral restraint, they would have sat down in an indolent savageism, and have lived in the practice of abominable iniquity. But when it was made known to the Christians of England that their lives had been transformed, and that they had become "meek, simple followers of the Lamb," there was, in addition to the confidence that they might be entrusted with liberty, a feeling that it would be a crime for them to be kept in bondage. It was not to be tolerated that men and women about whom the Holy Spirit had woven a zone of virtues and graces, should be driven like beasts, and have a price put on them as if they were on the same level as the mules and oxen on the plantations. The great word was spoken, and men, women, and children, to the number of eight hundred thousand, shouted "We are free!"

The work of Methodist Missions was still diligently prosecuted, but it must be confessed that, with the exception of years of special blessing, the success has not been so large and rapid as in the earlier times.

One cause of diminished results is to be found in the fact that the field is not so much our own as it once was. The Church of England has claimed a considerable share of it. Yet it was not by the

ministers of that Church that the negroes were first cared for. The missionaries found clergymen in the West Indies, but they did little more than conduct service for the white colonists ; and in many cases their character was such as to weaken rather than enforce the claims of religion. But when the hardest work had been done, when the greatest difficulties had been overcome, when at the cost of sorrows and persecutions the field had been prepared and the seed sown, the black people were asked to submit themselves to the charm of the surplice and the lawn sleeves. There must be cheerful acknowledgment of good done by bishops, rectors, and curates, but they have carried to the West Indies the spirit of haughty and bigoted exclusiveness which has caused grief to so many Christians in England. Their glorying there, is not so much in men and women saved from sin and death as in their figment of apostolical succession, their episcopal order, and their relation to the State. Their boast is that they only represent the true Church, that they only are the true ministers of Christ, and that to them only pertains the right to administer the sacraments. By pretensions such as these many of our respectable families have been lured from us, and our legitimate influence over the people has been weakened. Instances of clerical assumption have been so

glaring that they would have excited contempt and ridicule but for the harm that has been done. Even marriage and baptism by Wesleyan ministers have been ignored, and clergymen have pushed themselves into districts thoroughly worked by Wesleyan agencies. But if every movement had been fair and brotherly we should still have found a check to our success in the action of a church powerful in its prestige and drawing its supplies from the public purse.

We have also suffered not a little from deaths, or from failure in the health of missionaries. Many have been cut off by fever, and others so debilitated that in a few years they have had to leave the work. Most of the men are young, and are soon succeeded by men still younger. There are always some members of an English district meeting who are entitled to veneration on account of their white heads, their reminiscences of great preachers who went to their reward fifty years ago, their long experience, their ripened sagacity, and their piety mellow and beautiful as a laden orchard in the light of an autumnal sunset. But in a West Indian district meeting there is scarcely an old man. The fathers are wanting ; there are few that have reached even the prime of life, and the majority are but striplings. Few men can stay *until they become aged* ; and it is often seen that

.

as soon as a missionary has got accustomed to the people, and can speak and act with manly firmness, he is prostrated by fever, which either proves fatal to him or so disables him that he has to embark at once for his native land. The consequences are, that large circuits have a diminished staff of ministers, important societies are left without pastoral oversight ; there is a prevailing deadness, members fall away, and decrease has to be reported. Native agency is the best remedy for this evil, and under the oversight and guidance of a few European ministers, West Indians might be employed in doing what is so destructive to the health and life of Englishmen. Some have already been called to the work of the ministry, and the number must be increased until they have the care of the churches from the Bahamas to British Guiana.

There is also another cause which has tended to lessen the results of our Mission. In the time of slavery the people lived on the plantations, and stations were erected near them. But since the emancipation there have been considerable changes in respect to the residence of the people. No longer limited to one locality, and being industrious and careful, they have acquired lands, in some cases remote from the old stations. Settlements have been formed at such a distance that

the missionaries, having more than a sufficiency of work, have been unable to visit them, or have only been able to visit them at such long intervals, that an efficient organisation of societies has been an impossibility. In different parts of the West Indies there are thousands of black men and women whose memories and predilections are in favour of Methodism and whose severance from us is only a geographical one. The field has widened, but there has not been a proportionate increase in the number of labourers. Could we supply men to look after the scattered sheep there would soon be a cheering improvement in our statistics.

But notwithstanding hindrances and discouragements there has been progress ; and we may reasonably hope that there will be continuous increase in the future. The Mission originated in the West Indies by Thomas Coke, and achieving triumphs which enkindled the oratory of William Dawson, and awoke the loftiest eloquence of Richard Watson, will perpetuate its primitive glories in years to come, and be a blessing to thousands yet unborn. Still let the Gospel be preached in those numerous colonies, and whatever may be their political or commercial future, they will have the noblest freedom and the truest riches, and their *inhabitants* will form a choir of churches that will

take no unworthy part in the general melody demanded by the prophet : "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein ; the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit : let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands."

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